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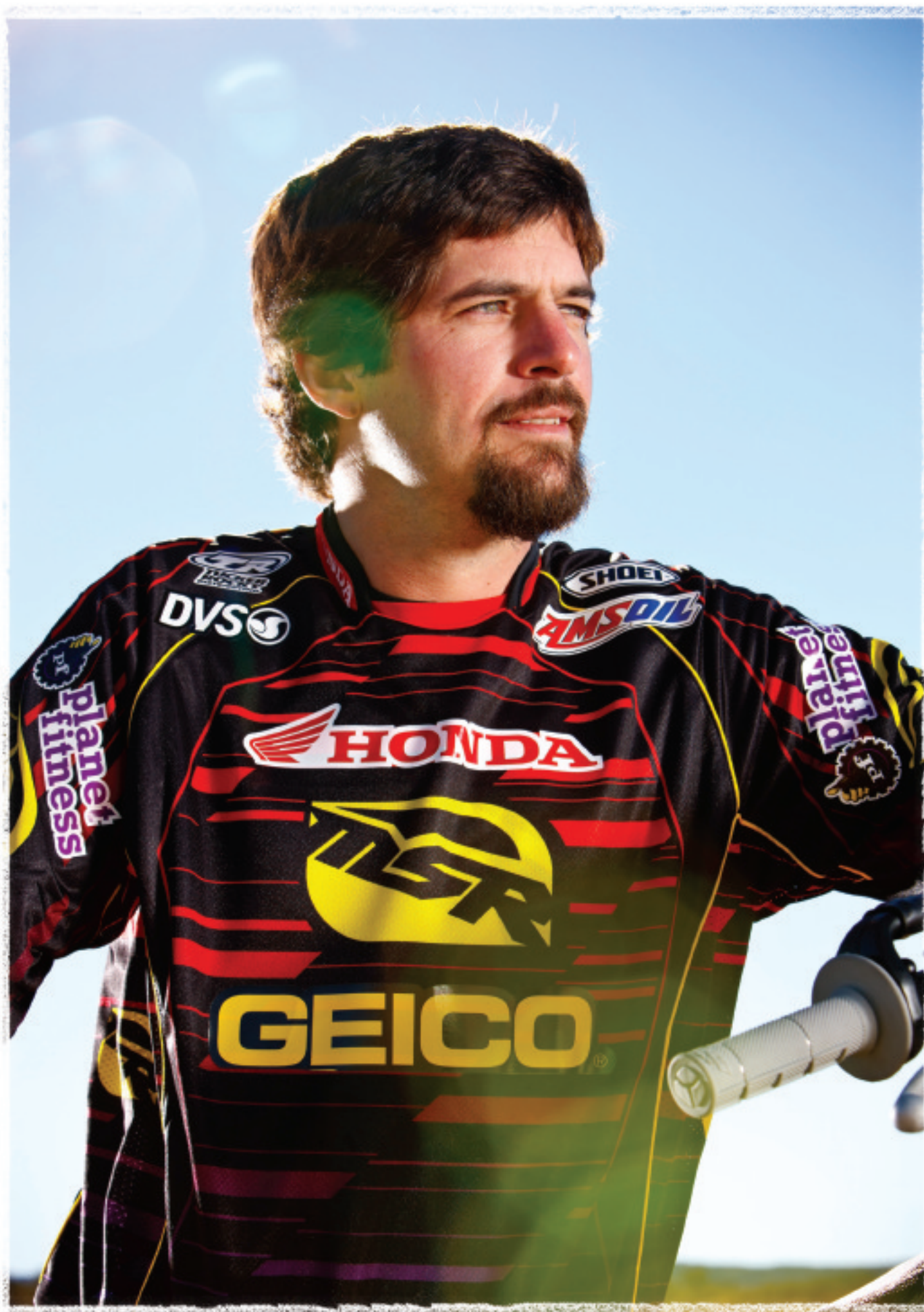


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COVER: Shaun Simpson prepares for his rookie season in the MX1 division © Ray Archer

CONTENTS: Andrew Short gives the 350SX-F a creditable debut in the AMA SX series © Hoppenworld.com



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COMMENT

It's funny how random things can trigger flashbacks. Just last week I was enjoying a bit of banter via the 'magic' of Facebook with a couple of my old schoolboy trials riding chums when something one of them said dragged me kicking and screaming back over 30 years to a Cumbrian fellside in the middle of winter.

We were debating the various virtues of two-strokes and four-strokes – now there's a novel topic of conversation – with the emphasis firmly on twinshock trials weapons. One has an old TLR Honda, the other is doing up a 125cc Fantic for his son and the Honda owner (who, incidentally, I sided with) dismissed the Italian machine as a 'horrid little red rev monster'. Suddenly I was a half-frozen 11-year-old again, three-quarters of the way up a killer climb and frantically fighting for grip on my 125cc Fantic!

Inevitably, it ended in a big, fat five as the horrid little red rev monster span to a halt and stalled. Planning to back the bike around so I could fire it into life I pulled in the clutch and tweaked the bars to the left. But the hill was so steep that I started to plunge backwards into the abyss I'd just battled my way out of. Instinctively, I dumped the clutch so the rear wheel would lock and halt my rearward progress but instead – and even now just thinking about it makes my arse twitch – the bloody thing started up IN REVERSE and fired me backwards down the hill before drilling me into a bog. Good times!

My formative years are peppered with incidents like that which have been filed away deep in the darkest recesses of my mind, only to reappear when some random catalyst causes the memories to come flooding back. Quite often it's a chain reaction – the Fantic in reverse scenario then got me thinking about the time I bravely piloted my TY80 into the middle of a duck pond so only the handlebars were visible. If I'd even suspected the magnitude of the paternal rollocking that was to follow I would have stayed there.

Interviewing Stephen Sword for this month's mag brought back other memories – most notably of a shy teenager wearing wraparound Oakleys standing on the podium at Whiteway Barton. And my ole mucker Jeff Perrett gets a bit rose-tinted this month when he hooks up with Kristian Whatley and is transported back to his dim and distant youth when he'd tear around Matchams, sharing track time with Kristian's GP-winning dad Jem.

Jeff, hopeless romantic that he is (for hopeless romantic read big soft sh*t), gets a bit misty-eyed at what he feels were the good old days and the temptation is to agree with him. It's only natural to look back on the past and think everything was just that little bit better when you were a throttle-happy eight-year-old with a full head of hair and hardly a care in the world (until, that is, you're dragged from the centre of a duckpond by an irate father). And while there's nowt wrong with reminiscing, the danger is you do it at the expense of looking forwards.

Sure, life was great and the racing was awesome when Jem Whatley was winning British titles but how about what 2011 has in store for us all? Read Sutti's big preview of this year's Maxxis series and then try and tell me that racing's not what it used to be. We may have only three domestic teams contesting this year's GPs but just look at the talent we've got who'll be fighting for Maxxis – and Red Bull Pro National – glory on our own shores this season. Then chuck Shaun Simpson into the mix as a wildcard at a handful of rounds and right there you've got the makings of an awesome, epic year of motocross without even having to leave the UK.

Having said all that, the season hasn't exactly got off to the best start for someone very close to all of us. Fresh back from an adventure in California where he tested KTM's 350XCF cross-country machine, our Technical Editor Godfrey Walker promptly spammed himself and shattered his left elbow. Obviously, it could have been much worse – it could have been his right elbow – but it was a nasty one all the same so a huge get well soon to Godfrey from all of us at DBR. You'll be gripping it and ripping it again in no time. LAFF!

Sean

Catch TC – and CCM team-mate Swordy – in supercross action in Liverpool this month



NEWSHAWND!

SUTTDAGW'S EPIC WHIRLWIND TOUR OF ALL THAT'S GOOD – AND BAD – IN THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIRT BIKE RACING...

Supercross is the hot topic this month with the AMA series kicking off Stateside while the Future West British Championship starts to hot up over here following the festive break with more top-line Brits than ever before signing up for the final two rounds of the championship that are set to take place in London and Liverpool.

Joining series contenders Gordon Crockard, Martin Barr, Tom Church, Brad Anderson, Neville Bradshaw and Adam Chatfield at Liverpool's championship finale will be Stephen Sword, Steven Clarke and American interloper 'downtown' Mike Brown. It's set to be stunning! Eager race fans that are super-quick might still get to snag a ticket for the final round of the series at Merseyside's #1 entertainment venue on February 19. Log on to the Echo Arena's official website (www.echoarena.com) or call the ticket hotline on 0844 8000 400 if you wanna see how this exciting series pans out as it happens.

Anaheim in sunny Southern California hosted the opening round of the AMA supercross championship at the start of January and since then the championship has steamed on through Phoenix, LA and Oakland. The anticipated battle between the big five – Ryan Dungey, Ryan Villopoto, James Stewart, Chad Reed and Trey Canard – is raging as planned with JS7 holding an early series lead ahead of Villopotatoman. For a full-on blow-by-blow account of all the action flick on over to our in-depth coverage that starts on page 100.

New CLS Kawasaki signing Tommy Searle removed himself from the West Coast Lites championship chase just days before it was due to start so he could properly concentrate on preparing for his return to GP competition in 2011. And after watching KTM's SX rookie Ken Roczen try and brain himself in the jumbo-sized US stadiums on several occasions it's probably not a bad decision to make. Josh Hansen currently leads the two-fiddy series ahead of Broc Tickle while Kenny sits seventh some 39 points behind the two-time X-Games gold medallist.

Lyca-loving trials fans got a reet treat at the Sheffield International Invitational Indoor Trial as no fewer than eight feet-up legends got it on in the

Motorpoint Arena. Making his debut on Gas Gas machinery, 12-time world champ Dougie Lampkin failed to qualify for the final after suffering a pair of punctures which left Leeds lad James Dabill plus Jack Challoner and Michael Brown to do it for the Brits.

A super-tough final round really sorted the men out from the boys and at the end of it all it was Toni Bou who took a well-deserved victory ahead of Adam Raga and Takahisa Fujinami. Meanwhile, the Brits finished fourth through sixth with Dabill beating Brown by one mark to claim the first non-podium position while the recently crowned Pinhard prize winner and current Junior world champ Challoner scraped home sixth.

Weeks after making that less than satisfactory Gas Gas trials debut, Lampkin looked to make amends at Eddy's Extreme Enduro where he span his first few competitive laps on the Spanish marque's enduro iron. Riding a bone-stock bike, Dougie qualified a very respectable third and then backed that up with a solid second overall behind the dominant David Knight who easily won both races. "Second overall is the best result I could have realistically hoped for," says Dougie. "I simply had no answer to David in either race so I just tried to stick to my own pace and get two solid results which worked out well for me in the end."

Le Touquet on the northern coast of France welcomed some of the world's leading off-road racers recently as the sleepy resort hosted its annual beach race where two-time world champ Steve 'The Bomb' Ramon roosted his way to victory ahead of local favourite Jean-Claude Mousse. With the win 'dans le sac' as they say on that side of the channel, the 31-year-old factory Suzuki star has now won all of Europe's major beach races – that's Le Touquet, Weston and Scheveningen. First Brit home (after Craig Trew's Suzuki derailed a chain on the last lap while he was running just outside the top 20) was Cornwall's Nick Life who managed a marvellous 35th place finish. Well done that man!

Events 22 – the promotions company behind the Red Bull Pro Nationals and a whole bunch of other sweet stuff – look set to take over the running of the UK's #1 beach race at Weston-super-Mare after



The 32-year-old KTM rider who was considered a real threat to take this year's title leaves a wife and family behind. RIP Nathan.

Less upsetting generally but still a bit of a gutter for us here at DBR HQ is hearing that our Tech Ed Geoff Walker injured his left elbow during an endurocross training session just before his column was due in – ooh, fancy that. Actually, injured is a bit of an understatement as the sometime spanner-spinner has been left with a middle-arm joint that looks like it's been banged by Ron Jeremy, Lexington Steele and Mandingo (whoever they are) in close succession – to say it's busted is definitely the understatement of the year. An operation has set things on the road to recovery and we expect Jiffers to be back in action real soon. LAFF!

Over in Germany, former DBR GP contributor and www.mx-pure.com webmaster Alex Hodgkinson has apparently been turned into a cartoon character called Herr Hodge and stars in an animated TV show of the same name that airs on the German equivalent of CBBC. Basically, the premise is that Herr Hodge is a grumpy photo-journalist type chap with a camera who has supernatural powers and stuff and goes around undoing evil and solving crimes in his camper – it's a bit like Scooby Doo, Jamie and his Magic Torch and Hong Kong Phooey all rolled into one. Honestly, it's going down a storm with the youth of Bavaria and it's so random that you really couldn't make it up – unless I just did...

While you're trying to figure out if that one's true or not (it's not) something real that's coming out of the continent and to a motocross race near you is speedy Scotsman Shaun Simpson. While the LS Motors Honda star isn't down to do the full Maxxis or Red Bull Pro Nationals championships, 'Woody' will be racing at selected rounds. The 23-year-old's first port of call will be the opening round of the Maxxis on March 6 followed by the Hawkstone International on March 20 then the second round of the British at Canada Heights on March 27. Sweet!

Simpson's not the only overseas Brit we can expect to see at Hawkstone this year though as CLS Kawasaki's MX2 dream team of Tommy Searle and Max Anstie have both signed up for the pre-season international bash as well as the Pro National that'll run at the Shropshire venue on August 27/28 where Ben Townley is also due to

make an appearance. We're also hearing that some international wildcards – including 'Woody' – will be hitting up the RBP season-opener at FatCat Motoparc on April 2/3. Keep an eye on www.mcfederation.com for up-to-the-minute info.

Grand prix news now and it's good news n'all as it transpires that the MX1 and MX2 world championships are set to return to the UK this year and not to a road race track, car park, horse racing paddock or fictional super-centre for off-road motorcycle sports either but a true to life bonafide GP-spec motocross track – Matterley Basin. The JDH-built track that lies in a natural bowl on the outskirts of Winchester last hosted the British GP – and MXdN – back in 2006 and if you can remember that far back you'll know that both events were off the hook! So put the date of August 20/21 in your diaries folks because this is going to be one weekend that you won't wanna miss.

Officially there are only three British teams signed up for the 2011 GPs – Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha, MVR-D Honda and HM Plant Red Bull KTM – although we expect to see the DB Racing Honda, Buildbase CCM and Proppa.com KTM teams in international championship action as well which should make it a pretty interesting year for UK fans abroad, especially when you add French-based Brits Tommy and Max into the mix as well.

As the world championships kick off in a month's time in Bulgaria – on April 10/11 – now's the time to be booking your trip if you want to get the best deals available. I'd recommend flying into Sofia with whoever is cheapest, renting a car – and a satnav if you don't have one – then driving over to Sevlievo for the race itself. Getting a hotel room locally is unlikely as Youthstream book 'em up years in advance so check out the tourist location of Veliko Tarnovo which is just a few kilometres up the road where cheap, quality hotels are always available.

That's about it for Newshound this month. Believe it or not this is the 100th issue that my words and/or pictures have appeared in Dirt Bike Rider which means that's eight years and four months of slaving away for next to feck all in a fart-infested office. Given the opportunity would I change it for owt else? Nah, probably not...

See you suckers at the races...



being awarded the licence to run the event from the North Somerset Council. However, things ain't that simple as it seems that RHL Activities' Gareth Hockey is claiming he owns all intellectual rights to the Weston Beach Race which he'll still apparently be running.

So what does it all mean? Well, I reckon that Events 22 will run a beach race at Weston-super-Mare sometime around the traditional date that beach races at Weston-super-Mare normally run and RHL Activities will run their 'Weston Beach Race' somewhere else completely. Confusing? F**k yeah! Silly? You knows it! Let's just hope that any event rivalry doesn't put a dampener on what's traditionally a top weekend on the British off-road calendar.

Slipping into what's on mode for a moment here's a quick list of events you should think about attending in the next few weeks... February 12/13 sees the British Sprint Enduro Championship series kick off at Saints Well near Llandrindod Wells, the final round of the British SX series takes place one weekend later in Liverpool on Feb 19, the Maxxis British Motocross Championship kicks into life at Little Silver on March 6 and then the UK's original extreme enduro – The Tough One – heads to Back Cwm Quarry near Rochdale on March 13. We'll see you there!

Bad news now I'm afraid as double WORCS champion, ISDE gold medallist and off-road training skills DVD star Nathan Woods was sadly killed in a riding accident while preparing for this year's WORCS series near his home in California.

Dougie gets to grips with the Gasser



Steve 'The Bomb' Ramon races to victory at Le Touquet

© suzuki-racing



© Ray Archer

Godfrey shows off his staples





GOING LIVE!

HOOK UP TO OUR KICK-ASS NEW WEBSITES AND JOIN THE DIRTZONE COMMUNITY

Are you bored with the usual motocross forums? Sick of the same small handful of keyboard warriors shoving their ill-informed, self-satisfied opinions under your nose every time you log on? Yep? Well so are we and, what's more, we're going to do something about it!

For the last six months we've been working flat-out behind the scenes alongside our buddies at T+MX and online partner Addictive Interactive on a couple of brand new websites that will be going live in March. So what's the big deal? New websites are launched all the time, right? Not ones like these...

The DBR and T+MX websites will operate independently of each other with different news, views and content – just like we've always done in the paper you pick up every week and the magazine you buy every month – but we will be joining forces for the most exciting aspect of the new sites, a social networking spin-off we're calling **dirtZone**.

Once you've registered with **dirtZone** you'll be able to upload your pics and videos, create your own unique profile and interact with other off-road fans. Think of **dirtZone** as your very own social networking community dedicated to off-road riding because that's exactly what it is

and to make it even easier to sign up and join in you can access **dirtZone** using your existing Facebook credentials. Simple!

Once you've signed up to **dirtZone** you'll be able to view the profiles of DBR columnists including Gordon Crockard and Jake Nicholls, tell Jeff Perrett EXACTLY what you think of him, leave a message for the Deputy Dawg and even admire the beautiful bum chin of our designer The Bear. What's more, by joining **dirtZone** you can enter an exclusive competition to win a Twisted 7 Kawasaki replica BW85 and a whole slew of associated team swag including product from One Industries, Pro Circuit, Muc Off, 661, Goldentyre, Spectro Oils, Renthal and MXM!

And remember, all this is on top of our brand-new websites that will bring you hot news and opinion, greater user interaction, enhanced content, dedicated video and image galleries and a fully-searchable one-stop virtual shopping centre.

The actual launch date hasn't been finalised – there's still some primping, preening and testing to be done – so keep your eyes peeled over the next few weeks for an announcement online at www.dirtbikerider.com and www.tmxnews.co.uk and in print in T+MX news...



dirtZone

BACK IN THE DAY!

A RANDOM TRAWL THROUGH THE
DIRT BIKE RIDER ARCHIVES



December 1987:

With his son Kristian featuring in this month's mag it's kinda fitting to go back over 24 years to an issue featuring Jem Whatley gracing the cover on his way to winning the Weston Beach Race. Elsewhere there's a test of the 1988 Suzukis, a profile on Irish ace Laurence Spence (who's just hit the big 5-0!), an interview with soon-to-be enduro world champ Paul Edmondson and a bar-draggin' pull-out poster of Rob Andrews...



November 1998:

Sticking with the Suzuki test theme, almost 11 years later it's Tony Marshall on the cover riding the new RM250 while inside we report on the Foxhill MXdN mudbath and Jeremy McGrath winning the Sheffield SX, catch up with world 125cc champ Alessio 'Chicco' Chiodi and publish Ray Archer's historic shot of Stefan Everts crashing out of the world 250cc title chase in Greece.

To trawl through more back issues of DBR hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and click on the digital vault button – new issues are constantly being added so keep checking back...



THE REVEREND

KIWI FRUIT!

JAKE'S HANGING WITH JOSH COPPINS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD AS HE PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO HIS PRE-SEASON PREP...

Words by Jake Nicholls

Wow! This last month has gone quick – seems like five minutes ago I was hacking around the woods at home on the 150 and now I'm as far away from my beloved woods as possible. Weep. Not!

I've been flat-out since last time I wrote. We left for our first family holiday in three years along with my girlfriend Blu, dad's bum buddy Pete and Tony and Jenni Marshall. We went in two cars down to Val d'Isère in the Alps for a week, staying in one of the nicest chalets I've ever set foot in. It was unreal and there was a cook that came in every evening and made the best meals I've ever eaten (apart from mum's roast).

We had an awesome time and it was by far the best holiday I've been on but I was so excited to get back and ride, especially when I read the write-ups on the SX. Man, how good have they been? Proper racing! I've got so much respect for the big four in the 450 class. All-out war and no fear on the track at all – inspirational or what! I've been watching them before I go to bed over here and all I want to do is ride or race and end up lying in bed stewing about it!

So anyway, we got back from France late on the Sunday night and that following Tuesday I was flying to NZ so I chilled at home and got some last-minute training in with the HK (Holeshot King) and felt strong. My Christmas present from my parents was a first class ticket to NZ which was sick and I slept a lot on the way which helped the jetlag situation a fair bit. I got some funny looks strolling in the first class lounges though – some grubby little herder in a lumberjack shirt and jeans with a backpack on. All good though and I made the most of it and ate everything on offer two times over just to impress my fellow first class chums.

JC picked me up from the airport in his sick little Toyota van. We arrived at his place which is just outside of a nice quiet seaside town at the top of the South Island and what a cool set-up he's got his self. I was very impressed as he gave me a tour, showing me his workshop/garage which I'm very confident would put most MX teams to shame. There's a small kitchen and toilet in the middle and it's where I'm going to be based so to say I'm living, sleeping and dreaming bikes would be so true as Josh's '05 Honda is right next to my bed!

The first day was spent lessening my jetslag, then we cracked on with some cycling. Over three days we covered heaps of miles and I got to see all of the local countryside which is beautiful, especially in the height of their summer. Then we drove to the local KTM dealer and picked up a spanking new 250F which has been so kindly lent to me for a month so a big thank you to KTM UK and KTM Oz for sorting that one out – I hope I can pay them back with a title this year!

My suspension and pipe didn't turn up until yesterday so for over a week I have been riding a truly stock bike with just my 604 Fat Bars on it and to say I have been impressed is an understatement. I don't want it to sound like a cheese ranger plug for KTM here but, honestly, I didn't even touch the clickers on the suspension and it was really good. Obviously, for a big boy like me sometimes it was a bit too soft but a hell of a stock package I must say. I rode three days the first week then thought 'bugger it' and entered a race called the Woodville International up in Palmerston North on

the North Island. Not exactly good timing for a race with just four-and-a-half hours in the bank but why not?

So JC's dad drove the bikes up there and Josh, Mike Church and myself flew up just for a day as Josh was on call for the birth of their second baby and, you guessed it, little Elsie was born midday Sunday when we were racing.

The racing was fun even though my starts were around 10th every time. The first race I was sleeping for the first few laps but got right into it near the end of the 20-minute sprint and came in fifth, four seconds behind the winner Luke Burkhart, Cam Dillon, Darryl King and Kayne Lamont so that was all right. The track was crazy fast – quicker than Langrish in places I would say.

The second moto was mixed with 450s and I rode real good in this one as it was roughing up. I passed all the MX2 boys and chased the fourth 450 before dropping it with one lap to go and came seventh. Last race got restarted three times but we eventually got away and I was pushing for fifth on the opening lap but they had ripped/graded it which sucked a bit and I lost the front and dropped it. I was furious (understatement) when I got up but I bit my tongue and got going last. I rode a good race and kept an eye on the leaders to make sure I was going quicker which I was but they were riding very well. Tough to beat on their home ground I guess – just like us Brits. As Craig Dack (Josh's Yamaha team boss and renowned ripper back in the day) informed me at the dinner table on Saturday night before the race, it was the toughest racing he has ever done when he lived in Luton and raced the Brit champs. I was so proud to hear him say that!

So we flew back Sunday night and Josh went straight off to see the new baba and Lisa. I enjoyed my first race a lot and all I could think about was racing again which I am this weekend, just a local race with some fast guys in it. It's in Greymouth where those poor fellas got blown up in the mine!

My suspension turned up Monday so I spent nearly all day fitting that – ha ha, I don't know why they haven't got me writing a column about working on bikes, I really don't. Riding's real nice on the factory WP suspension from home – I can push real hard with that stuff. Mike and Paula Church are over here helping out with the baby and Myla – Josh and Lisa's awesome little two-year-old girl – and also looking after me. They've been great company and great tea-drinking partners too. Even in 32 degrees heat I drink five cups a day – I love it!

Josh is riding a Yam 450 and looks really good at the minute – I think he's gonna kill it in Oz this year. He won the MX1 at Woodville and is looking strong so make sure you follow his attack Down Under on twitter @joshcoppins and why not get some updates on myself too through @JakeNicholls45.

Can't thank Josh enough for letting me stay here and train with him – his track and facilities are awesome. We're both working real hard and I feel good on the new bike. I'm looking forward to riding when I get home and getting in a bit of mud before the first round as I'm sure it will be moist! That's all for now folks...

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BLOOD SWEAT AND GEARS

Welcome, race fans. I know I joked last month about my extra post-Christmas ballast having its advantages but in all seriousness it looks like some late-winter training is definitely required. I stood on the scales this morning and nearly fainted. So it looks like I'm going to have to start hitting the gym again and putting in the miles on the treadmill. Not to mention a strict diet of rabbit food for a couple of months – all the while craving a kebab with all the trimmings.

At least the weather seems to be on our side again which means I'm able to get outside and give the 450 a good old blast. And how good does it feel? Once you get going you don't even notice the cold as you tear up the track (or in my case waddle and paddle around, desperately trying to avoid ending upside down in a pile of goo).

After a long break it feels great to be back in the saddle again. And that's true of filming, too. We've just got back from Tong, near Leeds, where we taped Fast Eddy's Extreme Enduro – a stunning event. David Knight (and I'm sure he won't mind me saying this) is an absolute animal. I suspect he could have hoisted that bike over his shoulder and ran around the course if he'd wanted to.

If you haven't seen the photos yet, wait until you see the footage we captured. One of the rock climbs wouldn't be out of place at a world trials round. In fact, it's the riders with the trial backgrounds that excel at these events. Dougie Lampkin is one such rider who is now becoming an established front-runner, extending his CV from trials. So it's a big hats off to all the riders who took part in this event. Especially the clubmen and the youth riders on what was a pretty formidable circuit.

It was also very encouraging to see an impressively large crowd all thoroughly enjoying the action. So well done Paul Edmondson on organising a fantastic event!

Next, we're rocking up to the O2 and Echo Arenas for some bar-banging supercross action. And if it's anything like the superb event in Belfast just before Christmas it certainly looks like British SX is back with a bang. The big teams are finally starting to see the light that this is fantastic exposure for their sponsors.

Action from all the aforementioned events will of course be shown on the new series of Blood, Sweat and Gears – we'll hopefully have the return date for you in next month's column. In the meantime, don't forget to check out our website www.bloodsweatandgears.tv to watch classic episodes of the show. Or why not jump on our Facebook page to let us know what you're up to?

Until next month, ride safe.

Paul Minihane

BLOOD SWEAT & GEARS will be back on the Extreme Sports Channel (Sky 419/Virgin 527) soon. Check listings for details.



CROCKSTAR

VIVA EL GORDO!

GC'S FLAT-OUT IN SPAIN RUNNING HIS WINTER TRAINING CAMPS AND PREPARING FOR A NEW SEASON WITH HIS NEW RELENTLESS SUZUKI BY TAS RACING TEAM...

Words by Gordon Everhard Photo by Bev Crockard

Firstly can I promote some very important health advice? Conor Campbell and Warren Clarke attended the first of my three 2011 winter motocross camps in Murcia and right now I'm lucky to be alive having dangerously decided to sit between them on an Easyjet flight from Alicante to Belfast. Flying I regard as being relatively safe – inhaling the toxic fumes that these two 'athletes' produced while trapped in a pressurised aircraft cabin at 30,000 feet is most certainly high-risk living and surely very harmful for your general well-being.

I am delighted to say I love my new Suzuki RMZ450. I have put around 15 hours hard riding in on the bike in stock trim. With the bike being developed by great champions such as Ricky Carmichael, Steve Ramon, Ryan Dungey and Chad Reed you can see how the Japanese Suzuki staff have arrived with a race winner right out of the crate.

In 2011 I will race for Relentless Suzuki by TAS Racing in the Maxxis British championship and the Red Bull Pro Nationals. The team is based in Northern Ireland and I will have Mel Pocock as my team-mate. Mel will contest MX2. Philip Neill and Adam Lyons are both former racers and I will benefit from their track experience when they fill their roles as Team Owner and Team Manager.

Mel has youthful exuberance and I can enjoy his teenage enthusiasm on any days when it seems arthritis is aching throughout my bones. My other fix to get around that feeling is to go round the paddock and talk to current fellow racer Mark Eastwood about how I used to watch him race in 1990 and got his autograph between motos at Elsworth Moto Parc. That proves to me I've still plenty of years left in me yet on the startline.

I'm 32 now – Everts and Smets were still winning world titles at 34 – and 2011 will be my 15th year contesting the British championship. I started on Yamaha in '97, then Honda, had one year on KTM, went back to Honda, then Yamaha again, then Honda again, then Kawasaki and now Suzuki. I've had my own little personal shoot-out. Consider my enduro and GNCC antics too where I raced BMW, Gas Gas and Husqvarna. Being the hoarder that I am I have collected quite a few team jackets in my wardrobe.

Race gear and associates for 2011 will be Alpinestars apparel and boots, Troy Lee crash helmets, Spy goggles plus Dial a Watch.co.uk Rolex and Lo Lease Options.co.uk vehicle support.

At every logistical opportunity possible I intend to race at home in the Irish and Ulster championships.

With the backing of my team I am looking forward to the home races being much easier to compete in as they will take care of all the hassle I have always been faced with doing the races on my own. We will be the official Suzuki GB motocross team so for sure the priority is the Maxxis British title and the Red Bull Pro National title, however, I as a rider am always motivated to win regardless of what race it is. Again as time allows I will look to do KWS British Masters rounds also.

The other morning I had a conversation-stopping moment. Sitting at 80mph on the motorway in Spain, the Sprinter van which was full to the roof with bikes and kit incurred a rear wheel blow-out. It was just after 7am and my tired eyes almost popped out of my head when I had to steer the three-wheeled wagon as straight as I could to a safe spot on the hard shoulder. Such drama is never welcome, that I knew already FFS!

Fast forward two weeks and I'm back in Spain at camp two. Graeme Irwin, Conor Campbell, Darren Grills, Iain Dobie, Warren Clarke, Ryan Adair, Kieran Clarke and myself have all been enjoying the weather, tracks, food, general group craic and banter. Each morning Graeme and I start our coastal seapath/beach run at 7:45am. It's just coming daylight and when the sun comes up the solar power kicks in and we are gifted an energy boost from the rays. A pre-breakfast run sure does get the appetite turned on full and we load up our intake as soon as we're back to the hotel. The group travel to the track each morning and we are on the bikes around 11am each day. The choice of tracks is good and we have eight to select from within roughly an hour's drive.

I have the London O2 SX this Saturday and I'll fly from Alicante late on Friday night. I'm going to race a Suzuki RMZ250F for Relentless by TAS. This will be our first event of many so I'm looking forward to getting started. The line-up is pretty hot and I'll do my best to be up front. I've never rode a 250F Suzuki but I have great faith that the package will be a strong contender.

It's time for me to get my kit on and put in some laps with the guys. Kieran has a 250 two-stroke and he's ripping around on it right now. The note out of it is seriously making me want one. You can tell exactly what he's doing with the throttle just by listening. It's mega. I love them. Adios! El Gordo...



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WIN! WIN! WIN!

An awesome Jimmy Fitzpatrick prize package from Freestyle Xtreme featuring goodies from Alpinestars, Etnies and the Metal Mulisha...

What do Danny the Champion of the World, Edwina Curry and Jimmy Fitzpatrick all have in common? The answer is, of course, poaching – although the things they like to poach are all very different. Danny does pheasants, Edwina's into eggs and Jimmy's all about sick riding spots like the Lilac Bridge that spans Route I-15 in sunny San Diego. And although we don't condone illegal activities such as 'poaching' we can't help but admire the athletes and photographers who put everything on the line to create the one-in-a-million images that the Metal Mulisha showcase in their 'Poached' line of adverts.

While some spots come easy – like yo' mamma – others like the Lilac Bridge are more difficult to nail which is why it took Fitzpatrick a few goes to successfully get it in the bag. But the good news is that when he finally did do it the end result was stunning – not like yo' mamma! To see what I mean log on to tinyurl.com/2ad4knw where you'll not only see the jump itself but also some behind the scenes footage of the actual jump and also the aborted attempts.

Anyhoo, because Jimmy finally did pull it off and also because the boys at Freestyle Xtreme (www.freestylextreme.com) are such good eggs they've pulled together this pukka prize package that includes three pairs of Etnies shoes, an Etnies cap, an

Etnies tee, a Metal Mulisha Rockstar cap, a Metal Mulisha Rockstar tee, a Metal Mulisha belt and a rare as rocking horse s**t, bonafide, 100 per cent genuine personalised for Jimmy Fitzpatrick Alpinestars race jersey that money just can't buy. Sweet huh?

To win this pimped-out prize package all you have to do is answer this question. On which attempt did Jimmy finally 'poach' the Lilac Bridge?

- Is it:
- A: He nailed it first time
 - B: The third attempt
 - C: The 99th go
 - D: He's never done it – it's a damned conspiracy like the moon landings

When you've decided on the answer log on to www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smart phone to scan the QR code that'll take you directly to our homepage, then follow the competition link, fill in the fields and hit transmit. The competition closes on March 10 with the first correct answer drawn at random grabbing the goodies. Two runners-up will each receive a crate of Rockstar Energy drink provided The Bear hasn't guzzled them all in the meantime...



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SWORDY

OH BABY!

SWORDY AND JODIE HAVE GOT ANOTHER NIPPER ON THE WAY BUT IN THE MEANTIME THERE ARE TITLES TO BE WON...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Nuno Laranjeira

First I'm going to start with some great news – Jodie is pregnant! We were about to start another cycle of IVF when we found out she was pregnant naturally. Being Scottish I am so pleased as it's saved me a small fortune. So, yes, I am going to be a daddy again!

This month has been tough with training and riding but it's been a massive help working in a group as I feel we all push each other to the limit more than when I ride alone. The weather has been good so I have been able to ride in England and that is always a bonus. Through the week we normally go away for a few days to wherever there are tracks that are good for us to practice on. I find it easier that way rather than driving for hours every day which to me is extra riding time. Also, this way Ayrton doesn't wake me at 5.45 every morning which is a killer!

I feel good on the bike and now I'm not doing the GPs my motos are only 20 minutes long so as long as I train as I always have my fitness is definitely not in question. The team are working hard to make sure that everything regarding the bike is right and we have time to test and make sure it is how I like it. I know sometimes I can be really fussy so I do feel for them. However, I just want to win!

I did a charity cycle from Swindon to Bristol – there was a group of us so we met at a little pub early in the morning and set off. It was so cold to begin with but we all stayed with each other and 60 miles later we arrived. None of them apart from Tom Church and I were in full-time training so we just took our time but it was a good laugh. We have all managed to raise a fair bit of money – it's for Children's Hospice South West and it was cool doing something like that for such a great cause. We have a ball to go to next month for the hospice so will find out exactly how much we raised.

I have a new personal sponsor, Ding Master, which is my mate's company. I have had my van

stickered up with their logo on the back – I can't wait for people to ask me when I'm parked up if I could remove a dent for them. No problem, just give me a hammer and I'll do my best!

On a serious note, it is great that people are willing to go out of their way to help, especially in the current climate. The riders really do need all the help they can get at the moment. It's annoying but some good riders cannot get a ride and a lot are riding for nothing. It's such a shame as it is such a hard and dangerous sport to ride round purely for the love of it. I am one of the lucky ones and have a great team behind me...

I had an interview the other day with DBR which is always a good laugh and Ayrton loved being part of the pictures. He starts to show off and plays up to the camera so I am looking forward to seeing the picture of him. He enjoys anything to do with bikes and is always walking round the house with my goggles or helmet on. I am sure he will be looking at the pictures of himself in the mag. Every rider is me as far as he is concerned – even Bubba!

I'm racing the supercross at the O2 on Saturday night which I'm looking forward to but have not had much chance to practice any supercross this year. I'm hoping it's all going to come back to me straight away. I would have loved to take Ayrton as he's obsessed with it all but it's far too late so just Jodie and I will be going. I will let you know how I get on in next month's column.

Anyway, that's it for another month – the racing will start soon so my columns will start being a bit more interesting as it's hard to write about your month when it's not race season. I'm looking forward to it all starting up again now and I am focused on winning – nothing more, nothing less.

Braaaaap #2

Handwritten signature: SWORDY #2



BryMac goes for glory in MX2 for Steve James' team



GREEN DAY!

KAWASAKI UK'S COLLECTIVE OF TEAMS AND RACERS GET TOGETHER FOR ONE LAST PLAY BEFORE THE SERIOUS STUFF BEGINS...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

With the 2011 race season right around the corner the officially supported Kawasaki UK riders and race teams all rock up to FatCat Motoparc for a final pre-season shakedown and photoshoot plus one last chance to have a play before the title chases kick off in earnest.

Steve James' Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki team are out in full force and wearing their all-new THOR clothing. Estonian Gert Krestinov remains on the team after a stellar debut year and will represent the squad in the MX1 class while newcomer Bryan MacKenzie will be their main hope in MX2 where he'll be joined by young Connor Walkley who's fresh out of the Team Green programme.

Those three will be contesting the Maxxis British championships and Red Bull Pro Nationals as well as rounds of the British Masters when they can. It's also hoped that Gert and BryMac will hit a few selected GPs while Connor hopes to race at some E-MX2 rounds if possible.

The team also have Lee Dunham representing them in the AMCA and IMBA championships once again, however this time the two-time double MX2

champion is moving up to the MX1 class.

Bringing a healthy bit of in-house competition into the pro ranks is the all-new Lanes Kawasaki team. Dean Lane who supported the MVR-D Suzuki team last year has decided to go it alone and set up his own team consisting of the undoubtedly talented Scott Elderfield and the ever-consistent Alex Snow.

Like the LPE team they'll mostly be concentrating on the Maxxis British championship and Red Bull Pro Nationals. Elderfield will be going for the MX2 crown while Snow will be trying to do the same in the MX1 class. Like the LPE team both riders look strong on their new rides and stylish too in their new One Industries and 661 threads.

Another team that's looking sharp – also wearing One Industries and 661 – is the Twisted 7 Kawasaki team. After a couple of years away, the team is now back at their spiritual home of Kawasaki and have put together a great youth team full of promising talent. The team has picked up support from Monster Energy and Pro Circuit through CGH Imports which gives them every chance of competing for the major youth titles with their seven-lad line-up.

Harry Kimber represents the team in the 65cc class while Sid Evans and David Keet go in the SW85cc class. Next up is Todd Kellett who's riding a big wheel KX85 while James Harrison steps up to the Rookie class on a KX250F and races alongside Ty Kellett who's now back to full fitness after his horrendous Weston Beach race accident.

Lewis Trickett is the team's only pro level rider as he moves out of youth motocross and into the big leagues. He'll be racing predominantly in the Red Bull Pro Nationals and some rounds of the Maxxis British championship.

The Team Green programme will still continue with Kawasaki UK race coordinator Ross Burridge lining up three riders – Jake Millward, Luke Newman and Damon Brooks – to compete on the KX250F in the major youth championships.

Ross is delighted with the effort the teams have already put in. "All of the teams' presentation is awesome and I think that Kawasaki is going to be represented in a fantastic way this season. Every rider looked really impressive out on the track and I can't wait for the first round of the Maxxis at Little Silver to see most of them in action!"

Connor Walkley is a successful graduate of the Team Green programme



Twisted 7's David Keet will be racing SW85cc machinery

Youth ace Jake Millward's flying the flag for Team Green



MAX POWER

HEADING HOME!

MAX IS MAKING THE MOST OF THE SUN BEFORE IT'S TIME TO PACK UP AND FLY BACK TO EUROPE TO START HIS CAREER AS A GP RACER...

Words by Max Anstie Photo by Sarah Gutierrez

The last month has been pretty cool – we've been training hard and doing loads of motos. We also raced at Glen Helen and tested the race bikes and in between the practice motos and bicycle rides we found the time to hit the slopes and go snowboarding!

Jordan Booker, Ange (French dude), Gary (Jordan's factory mechanic), myself and a buddy from NorCal (Nick) headed out bright and early to Big Bear Mountain. Jord had done a snowboarding lesson and Nick had been three times before but the rest of us were all going up the mountain for the first time. Naturally I told myself that it was going to be easy but when we finally reached the top we all found out that snow can hurt! Gary found out the hard way and ended up on his head and in an ambulance within 10 minutes.

Ange found it easier to sit down on his snowboard and torpedo straight down the mountain smashing into anything that stood in his way. And while slick Nick carved his way effortlessly down the mountain, Jord and I were falling off the lifts, sliding on our faces and laughing at Ange nearly die every two seconds. After the big day at the slopes we stopped by Tilted Kilt for dinner – it's a bit like Hooters but probably a bit better. Gary never actually got to get a picture with Josh Hansen at a supercross but Hansen's sister was working in the restaurant so he got a picture with her instead.

We actually went and raced REM Saturday motocross at Glen Helen which was sweet. The guys at the event found a trophy of mine from 2004 in the 65cc class that I got presented with at the riders' meeting. So with two 20-minute motos under my belt and some good starts I am feeling okay and Ange actually got a third which was awesome for him because he has never got a trophy before – so to get one from Glen Helen was pretty cool.

I have just been told that I'm going to be racing the Hawkstone International which is awesome! I've never raced at Hawkstone but

have heard loads of stories from dad and just can't wait to race back in the UK! I'm only out here for another week before I'm heading back to Belgium for our final testing in the sand before the international races begin.

I'm ready now to get back and start my work, my preparation has gone well and I'm looking forward to a new challenge with getting over to Europe and racing some different boys. I am also really excited to be racing the GPs and believe that I'm going to learn a lot on and off the track.

Last Thursday I got the opportunity to ride with Tommy and test the race bikes and that was sweet. It is definitely cool to be a part of the Pro Circuit programme – the whole thing is working good so we're ready to rock!

On a slightly different note, Jordan and Gary left the facility yesterday to head back to sunny England but before they left Gary had a little ordeal. He wanted to go out and drink a little at the sushi bar in town so while Ange, Jordan and I had food, Gary got – in his words – blinded! It was 8.30pm when Gary finally hit the wall he was stumbling around, peeing outside restaurants, shouting abuse at people and smashing his shoulder against a pay meter! And after we finally got him in the car he wanted to throw up so we pushed him out and he ended up passed out in the middle of the road choking in his own puke.

It took four of us to lift the 18 stone lump into the back of the van, get him in the recovery position and stop him from choking on his sick. It was seriously like a movie! We had never seen anything like it before. Gary made it to 9pm but to be honest he was only on a tuna diet so he had no food in his stomach to soak up the alcohol. Anyway thanks Gary for keeping my bike sweet!

I'm just getting ready for one more hard week before it's back to the cold. Gotta make the most of it...

Max

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Christophe Pourcel



Asterisk Cell knee brace as ridden by Ryan Dungey and Andrew Short (part of Team USA) winners of MXoN 2010

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Elliott BANKS-BROWNE

DB RACING HONDA'S TREND-SETTING SPEEDSTER COMES CLEAN ON DOWN-SIZING, STAYING HEALTHY AND RACING GPs...

Interview and photo by JP O'Connell

Q: After riding for the four-rider Swift Suzuki team how different is it riding for a much smaller set-up?

Martin Bradley, Cumbria

A: "I prefer being on a smaller team like DB as it's really fun and relaxed. Swift was cool but a lot of pressure and a lot about the sponsors, it was all a big show really and pretty strict. I suppose with DB we just go there to race – that's their main priority which is cool and I like it."

Q: How disappointed were you to lose out on the Red Bull Pro National title this year?

Dean Reynolds, High Wycombe

A: "I was so disappointed, it was going to be hard to win it with 15 points to close in the last round but I thought I could do it for sure. I did my best with a 1-1 and was looking at where Martin [Barr] was the whole race but I suppose it just wasn't meant to be. It was pretty close there at the end but I was very disappointed for sure. After the disappointment had worn off I was still pleased with my year though as it was the first year I have been able to be in the championship fight until the very last race or at all really. It's made me a stronger person too I think and at least I know what I have to do this year to take the title."

Q: Are you and Jake Nicholls still friendly and do you practice together at Jake's track?

John Fisher, Plympton

A: "Yeah, me and Jake are still mates but don't see each other as much as we used to as we both have a lot of things going on now. I have rode there a few times and it's good to ride with each other and push each other – he has an awesome track there and it's fun. But after all we do go out every weekend trying to beat each other so I suppose we better not ride with each other all the time or we will find out each other's weaknesses!"

Q: What's the likelihood of your team ponying up and sending you to America to race the West Coast SX next year?

Kevin Bell, Maiden Newton

A: "To be honest I have not even spoke to the team about it but for sure it is something I want to speak to them about as that would be awesome and I think Dave [Bright] would love to go over there and race a bit. It's a dream of mine to race supercross and I will do it one day but you can't just go over there and race,

you have to be over there months before to train or you will just get hurt. But watch this space and maybe it will happen, I hope so."

Q: I've only ever seen you racing in Shift gear but I've heard a rumour that DB Racing have been sponsored by No Fear. Will you be in a new brand of kit for 2011?

Tony Walsh, Chalk

A: "Yeah, that's right, I'll be riding in No Fear gear for 2011. I signed a deal with them at the end of 2010 which is pretty exciting. I will be wearing No Fear gear, Shoei helmets, Spy goggles and Alpinestars boots. It was a very hard move to leave Shift as I had been with them for four seasons and they were so good to me. But I had to do what's best for me and I think the move will be good as No Fear is a cool company and have been around for years, I'm very excited. For 2011 I have a total new look which is fresh for me and I also have a deal with No Fear Energy which is just being released in the UK at the minute. I'm also having some pretty sick lids being sprayed up at the minute so be sure to check them out!"

Q: Are there plans for you and DB Racing to contest any of the GPs this year and if so do you know which ones?

Paul Jenkins, Bideford

A: "Yeah, we are definitely going to do some GPs – hopefully about seven to 10, all the ones that don't clash with any of my UK races. That's the plan anyway. I do miss racing GPs and want to be back racing them – all my training has been around racing the GPs and I know I am fit and ready and want to show I can be back there mixing it up with them boys."

Q: Have you got your hands on your new race bike yet and if so how does she compare to the machine you were racing last year?

Nathan Collins, Minehead

A: "I actually just started testing my race bike today in Spain and it is unbelievable – I love it and it already feels faster than last year's bike and we have only done one day of testing. I am very excited to ride the finished product – can't wait! I also have a few cool new suspension bits to try when I get home with FTR Suspension which should be really good. I'm confident that when the season starts we will have one of the best – if not the best – bikes on the line!"

Q: With the British champs, RBPNs and GPs running different race day formats which suits you best?

Scott Barnes, Midsomer Norton

A: "They're all totally different and I probably prefer the GP format as you get a lot of time on the track to get dialled in. Also, when you're fit it makes a big difference and it is easier to come through at the end of the race than in the 20-minute motos of the British champs if you don't get a good start. I also like the fast and furious races at the British as you have to be on it from the minute the gate drops to the flag and it's normally pretty close racing."

Q: Will your dad still be spannering for you this year?

Ian Browne, Bury St Edmunds

A: "I hope this isn't my dad writing in and it's just a coincidence you have the same name! But, yeah, if this is you dad then you're with me again for 2011. We had a good year last year and it worked really well, we have a good relationship and it's easy to work with him and I have 100 per cent confidence in my bike every race."

Q: It's customary for you to start the season with some sort of injury – are your bones where they should be?

Paul Martin, Staffs

A: "It's seemed to be that way for the last few seasons for sure but at the minute I am 100 per cent and hope to stay that way from the beginning until the end of the season this year. I am a lot fitter than I have ever been before so things are looking good at the minute."

Q: How long do you think you'll stick with the 250F before moving up to the 450?

Adrian Cox, Hucknall

A: "My plan is to have a good year this year and if I win a title I think I will move up to the 450 in 2012, it just depends on if I have any offers to go and race GPs. If there is then I might stay down and race 250 as there is an age limit in the GPs now of 23 but even so you could still see me on a 450 full-time in 2012 if things go right. I love the 450."

NEXTMONTH MARVIN MUSQUIN >>

If you've got a question for KTM's back-to-back world MX2 champion then fire it across to us at dbproprobe@googlemail.com

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TAP AND UNWRAP THIS MONTH'S ALL ORANGE AFFAIR AS KTM'S MARVIN MUSQUIN AND JEFFREY HERLINGS FACE OFF...

Interview by JP O'Connell

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

MM: "I think Tom Cruise would be good."

JH: "Jim Carrey I think – he's a funny guy and I like to be funny too."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

MM: "When I am alone and training then I will clean my own."

JH: "My dad tried to show me how to do it about three years ago but to be honest I wasn't too interested!"

DBR: What was the last lie that you told and who was it to?

MM: "I try not to tell any lies."

JH: "I probably lie all day! I think the last person was probably my girlfriend – just a little one!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

MM: "I just get on and ride it – I let KTM do the work on it!"

JH: "The only thing I can do on a bike is put fuel in!"

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

MM: "It depends. If it was for a championship then definitely yes but normally I would say no..."

JH: "Depends who it is – if it's a team-mate then no, if it's not and it's for an overall or something then why not?"

DBR: What's been the highlight of your on-track career so far?

MM: "My first world title."

JH: "Coming in under the radar and winning my home GP"

DBR: What car do you drive?

MM: "I have a 1 Series BMW and a Vivaro van."

JH: "I haven't passed my test so I don't know yet."

DBR: And if money were no object?

MM: "Hmmm, there are a lot of nice cars out there – maybe a BMW X6."

JH: "I like the Ferrari and the Porsche – I pretty much like all of the expensive cars!"

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

MM: "No no, it's not good to do that..."

JH: "No, I never blame my bike or mechanic if there's nothing wrong – if I'm riding bad then that's down to me."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

MM: "Sometimes I wish I could be both physically and mentally stronger."

JH: "Maybe to be a bit stronger mentally. Everything has happened so quickly for me, when people pass me then I get stressed and usually make a mistake and crash when I try to catch back up so I need to work on that."

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

MM: "To spend a day with James Stewart would be cool – you know, the tracks, the house. Not the Bubba's World bit though!"

JH: "I would really like to meet James Stewart as obviously he is the fastest rider in the world. I want to train with him and see what he is doing for the sport, I really look up to him."

DBR: If you could have any super power for a week what would it be?

MM: "I think to be invisible."

JH: "I'd like to be Superman so that I could do everything – you know, be cool and get all the girls."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

MM: "A bike, a lot of fuel and plenty of water for me."

JH: "A nice girl, some food and I'm all set!"

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

MM: "Other than my girlfriend and family it would be some of my most important trophies."

JH: "My bike and money."

DBR: Do you Google yourself?

MM: "I admit that I do check it for images of myself but I have a website so don't do it too often."

JH: "It's more likely to be YouTube so that I can watch any movie clips."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

MM: "Blonde."

JH: "Blonde."

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

MM: "[Laughing] Oh that's really difficult, I really can't answer!"

JH: "[Laughing] If I could pick a GP win or sex then it would be the GP win!"

DBR: One thing about your riding style that you'd like to improve?

MM: "Just to cut out all of the mistakes."

JH: "I think my style is pretty good but I'd like to improve on the hardpack tracks."

DBR: What's your favourite film?

MM: "It's a French film called Les Collegues about a Marseilles football team."

JH: "White Chicks."

DBR: What's your most annoying habit?

MM: "I'm a pretty laidback guy and hopefully I don't annoy anyone."

JH: "I have been known to be late!"

DBR: What's the worst motocross related decision you've made during your career?

MM: "Uh there's been one but I'd rather not say what it is!"

JH: "I don't think I have made one, all of my contracts are good and I'm happy so it's all good."

DBR: If you had to permanently give up either the internet, your mobile phone or TV which would it be?

MM: "Easy, the TV. If I don't have that then I'll just go on the internet!"

JH: "Television."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

MM: "It's my one secret!"

JH: "I want people to know that I'm just a regular guy and I'm not up myself. At a GP it can be very hard to answer every question and sign every autograph – it's not because I don't want to, it's just that there's simply not enough time."

AJ Racing, from left, Andrew O'Brien, Jordan Campbell, Phil McCullough, Jason Garrett, Jim O'Brien and Davy Gorman



STARTER'S ORDERS!

THE TEAMS ARE FINALISED, THE DEALS ARE DONE AND THE CONTRACTS ARE SIGNED – NOW IT'S JUST A CASE OF THE RIDERS ROCKING UP TO THE STARTLINE...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Race Deal PR

Going one-two in the Irish MX2 championship last season with Jason Garrett and Davy Gorman has really pushed the AJ Racing team to the next level. As I write this Team AJ are packing their bags for two weeks training in So Cal – not that I am jealous, much!

Part of the expansion and evolution of the team for 2011 has been to engage the services of Phil McCullough – and not only in a training role! Big Phil will partner Davy Gorman and Andrew O'Brien in the team's official MX1 line-up for their Ulster and Irish championship campaigns. Jordan Campbell will carry the AJ colours in Grade B aboard his KTM 250F, the talented youngster is very much looking forward to a season under the AJ Racing team awning.

Now that it's official that GC's riding Relentless Suzuki by TAS this season all that remains for Blarney to do is wish him and the team all the very best for 2011. This could be the break Gordy needs to hoist himself back to the top in British motocross. Phil Neill for one believes that there's another British championship available from the Newtownards man. "I only wish that I had had a 10th of the natural talent that Gordon has when I was racing," quips the TAS bossman. It's true, GC has not had a stellar season in many a year but, even so, there have been times lately when the Crock Star still shines through and serves up a helping of brilliance.

Adam Lyons landed the job of Team Manager

for the new Suzuki squad. Since hanging up his MX boots Adam has focused his eternally competitive spirit on running the family Peugeot car dealership and adrenalin pumping mountain bike races. Blarney spoke to Adam about his new role and return to British MX, albeit from a different perspective to that of a rider.

"We are under no illusions as to the depth of talent and how professional the top teams in the UK are right now," says the former MJ Church Kawasaki rider. "Our primary objective is to present Suzuki and all our sponsor partners in a professional manner – both on and off the track – which I have every confidence we will do well.

"We have two talented riders in Gordon and Mel Pocock. Vastly different in experience and youth, it's a good mix and I think they will gel and enjoy working together.

Results wise, I know what both riders are capable of and I am confident we have a great package from Suzuki. That said, this season is about building a solid foundation from which to build a championship-winning platform for the future."

Martin Barr and the Proppa KTM look like a marriage made in heaven. Marty loves the bike and I think it's happy enough with him by the looks of his lap times at the local practice track. While Martin is excited and focused on an assault on the British MX1 crown, he's also thrilled to get another chance at racing a number of GPs this year as he feels that he has unfinished business in that field.

It's going to be a fantastic season for the Irish contingent in the British MX1 class this year – I can honestly say that with Graeme Irwin, Martin and Gordy we have a realistic chance of taking moto wins and more than a chance of bringing the top accolade back across the pond.

The forward thinking Carrickfergus Motorcycle Club have released details of their forthcoming extravaganza – a two-day motocross on August 19/20. The club continue to build on their relationship with the Carrickfergus Borough Council by making them a partner in this event alongside the popular Knockagh Lodge.

An all-new purpose-built circuit is on the cards and will be co-designed by ex-GP riders Stephen Russell and Laurence Spence, the latter of whom enjoyed a surprise 50th birthday party a few weeks ago. Congratulations Laurence – I believe one of the highlights of the evening was a CD of 'back in the day' which was professionally commented by Mr Norman 'Surprise, Surprise' Watt.

A big thank you goes out to everyone involved in the upcoming fundraising day for fellow competitor Chris Gibson who was injured at the end of last season. We all send Chris our best wishes for the future. Desertmartin is the obvious venue for such an important event and as usual the generosity of the close knit motocross family is evident as club members, First Aid etc have made their services available for the cause.

Stevie
dirtbikerider 29



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Nathan Woods rips it up at last year's ISDE in Mexico



RISKY BUSINESS!

WE CAN TRY TO MAKE RACING MOTORCYCLES OFF-ROAD AS SAFE AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE BUT THERE WILL ALWAYS BE AN ELEMENT OF DANGER...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

Whether it's through organisational necessities like risk assessments or through innovations in rider equipment such as neck braces – everywhere you look today it's clear to see how competitive off-road motorcycling has, generally, become increasingly safer.

By wrapping ourselves in the latest and greatest protective clothing, while being well aware of the 'miracles' of modern day medicine, we secure ourselves in the notion that life-threatening injury is something that won't happen to us. 'What if?' is a question that's a million miles from our minds each and every time we throw a leg over a bike.

How easy it is to forget what a fragile thing human life really is.

I say all this in light of the passing of US racer Nathan Woods – father, motorcycle fan, two-time US WORCS title winner, 2010 US ISDE team member. I'm not going to pretend I knew Nathan, I didn't. But I certainly knew of him and irrespective of how well known he was to folk here in the UK his death is both tragic and sobering.

I met Woods at last year's ISDE having

watched him race on a number of occasions prior to that. He, along with all members of the US Trophy Team, was getting stuck in and helping out a couple of team-mates whose bikes had arrived late in Mexico and needed to be prepped for the event ASAP. While it was very much a case of all hands on deck the friendly and good-natured banter between all riders was something I remember clearly. There was no pecking order, no 'that's not my job' attitude. Everyone mucked in to get the job done.

I have no idea where Woods finished come the end of the 2010 Six Days. I know he didn't do great and that he certainly didn't challenge the mainly French front-runners. But he was there in Morelia as a part of the US Trophy Team doing his best and representing his sponsors. Outside of his West Coast comfort zone he was riding for whatever the US equivalent of Queen and country is. Giving his all. Enjoying himself.

If you didn't know Woods you could easily assume he was a 'bad ass'. I almost did the first time I saw him. Quiet with a menacing demeanour, he had a character that couldn't be worked out from afar. With a sizeable physical presence, the odd tattoo and a

serious look about him, the fact that he wasn't overly expressive or vocal meant that he weirdly also blended into the background. Less comfortable in the company of 'Euros' than the likes of Kurt Caselli or Mike Brown, in Mexico Woods came across as the strong silent type.

The death of any motorcyclist is hugely sad news but when it's a professional racer, one of the world's best trained over seasons to deal with on-track battles, it's somehow harder to understand. Off-road racing – be it WORCS, GNCC, EWC, national enduro or cross-country events – is thankfully generally very safe. Obviously, there are dangers – and it's the dangers that in part attract us to the sport. But they are governed, regulated, minimised. Although not eradicated.

The Dakar however is a very different story as prolonged periods of high-speed racing can and sadly does claim lives. But not this year. With the event largely more technical and with speeds reduced it was all about the winners and finishers. Just as it should be.

But now, so soon after the Dakar, we have the news that Nathan Woods has passed away following a racing accident. RIP Nathan...



RENTHAL APPAREL CASUAL CLOTHING

With 142 world titles and 111 US championships in the bag Renthall are highly regarded as the leading handlebar and sprocket manufacturer in the world. And now that very same passion and expertise is being used to create a new range of casual clothing like these tees – cool huh?

Price: Tees from £20.42
Supplier: renthalapparel.com
Contact: 0845 058 9888

THOR CORE TRANSMIT RACEWEAR

THOR's legendary Core gear has already been tweaked for 2011 and now it's been tweaked again for the launch of this limited edition Transmit racewear that's now fresh in the UK thanks to those good old boys at Madison HQ. While we should have been seeing this kit on the back of Jake Weimer in AMA SX action a pre-season splat attack saw the #32 Kawasaki superstar sidelined so in theory, if you're quick, you could be the first racer on the track to win in this racewear. Hurry!

Price: TBC
Supplier: madison.co.uk
Contact: 0870 034 7226



LEATT-BRACE 2011 ADVENTURE II NECK BRACE

With some subtle upgrades and new colours available – like this stunning white model – the 2011 Adventure neck brace from Leatt is now available through Apico's dealer network. Made from injection moulded, glass reinforced nylon the Adventure II is designed to protect the wearer from head and neck injury by using alternative load path technology. The Leatt Adventure II is currently available in two colours (white or grey) and two sizes (S and M). Kinky.

Price: £233.95
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 01282 473190

EVS HAZARD WEB KNEE BRACE

Sold individually rather than as a pair these Hazard Web knee braces from EVS offer superior impact protection and enhanced knee stabilisation. Made out of light but extremely rigid carbon fibre the braces have anatomically correct hinges, adjustable hyperextension lockouts and crumple zones. For more information about the technologies involved log on to www.evs-sports.com.

Price: £374.99 each
Supplier: racefx.co.uk
Contact: 0845 450 1448

FOX RACING A1 PLATINUM RACEWEAR

If you've already caught all of the Anaheim 1 supercross action on ESPN or Motors TV then you'll have seen this super-sweet Fox A1 Platinum racewear because it's the exact same stuff that Ryan Dungey wore on his way to that second place finish in the four-five-oh Main Event. Comin' in one colour only – white/red – but in all the sizes under the sun this trick swag is ideal for all you bangers out there who like to stay bang on trend.

Price: Jersey £50 Pants £150
Supplier: foxeurope.com
Contact: 0191 487 6100



MSR

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MSR and Rockstar have teamed up to offer you this proper off-road inspired OTB (that's Over The Boot in case you were wondering) racewear that's ideal for enduro and trail riders plus anyone who's into that old-school free rider look. All MSR racewear is built to perform and last and this OTB stuff is no different. Check some out at your local MSR dealer today...

Price: Gloves £24.99 Jersey £38.99

Pants £98.99 Helmet £109.99

Supplier: Off Road Action

Contact: 01282 473190

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The stainless steel LeoVince X3 – one of the most finely crafted exhaust systems around – is now available for KTM's killer 350 at a bargain price that's just under 600 bucks. With a carbon end cap, rear bracket and heat shield, titanium sleeve and amazing amounts of attention to detail this high quality exhaust system outperforms the stock system while still conforming to the latest noise test levels. What a bargain!

Price: £595.95

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190



SPECTRO OILS

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Spectro's high performance range of off-road lubricants is now available in the UK thanks to the nice folks at Battistinis. For those of you not in the know Spectro Oils produce a full range of high performance synthetic, semi-synthetic and petroleum-based lubricants for two-stroke and four-stroke engines plus a wide range of suspension fluids, brake fluids, chain lubes and sprays.

Price: Various

Supplier: Battistinis.co.uk

Contact: 01202 437 400

PULSE RACING

MAINTENANCE METER

How many hours is it since you last changed your dirt bike's oil or replaced its piston and rings – 10 hours, 20 hours or maybe even 100 hours? Keeping on top of motor maintenance is mega important and if you had a Pulse Racing Maintenance Meter on your machine you'd be able to figure out exactly how long it is since you changed your oil, checked the valves or fitted a top end kit. So in essence a Pulse Racing Maintenance Meter lets you know exactly when you need to service those all important servcables and dirty dirigibles.

Price: £39.99

Supplier: pulseracingproducts.co.uk

Contact: Race FX 0845 450 1448

DC SHOES

COMMAND ROBBIE MADDISON SHOE

As one of the baddest FMXers on this planet Robbie Maddison definitely deserves a signature shoe and as a DC-sponsored athlete it makes sense that the world's leading skate shoe manufacturer would hook a brother up with a super sick sneaker that rules supreme over all others. The shoe – a white/gold/black DC Command complete with Maddo squirls aplenty – is now available online from Freestyle Xtreme who as well as getting first dibs on this shoe stock more DC casual wear than anyone else on this planet.

Price: £69.99

Supplier: freestylextreme.com

Contact: 0117 967 2240





E CRAIC ON!

Here are some pictures for the Rant page of me and my buddy Dave putting some hardcore, seriously motivated practice in over the winter in nice and sunny Northern Ireland. I just thought these might cheer up all you DBR readers out there and take away those lonely winter blues!

There's some craic to be had riding in these conditions – I spent 20 minutes riding and three hours washing the bike.

Keep up the good work at DBR – the mag is great and I look forward to it every month.

Ryan, Belfast

Whataboutye Ryan! Good to see you're not letting the crappy weather getting in the way of your pre-season prep! Who needs SoCal anyway? Bunch of bloody Jessies! There's nothing like bike-swallowing conditions like these to brush up on your rut-riding skills. Keep your eyes peeled for the postie as there's going to be a nice new pair of Etnies winging their way to you soon – try and keep them a bit cleaner, eh?



FAN FE-MAIL!

Hi Dirt Bike Rider! I've just written in to tell you that I love your magazine! It's brilliant and it's my fave! Keep up the good work!

Amber-jo, Norfolk

Thanks Amber-jo! Say hello to George and Elaine Collins for us next time you see them...

McREVIN!

Hi everyone at DBR! Not sure where to send this so hopefully one of you guys will pass it on to the right place. I'm looking to get some help with riding a 250 two-stroke – it's an old 1990 RM250 I've got and I don't have a clue how long to hold it in each gear before changing up. I'm scared in case I blow the thing up – is there any easy way to tell when to change or is it an acquired skill?

Thanks and keep up the work with the mag – best one on the market!

Scotty, Ayrshire

As long as your bike's well looked after you should be able to hold a gear without fear of blowing it up and when the time comes to hook a higher one you'll know Scotty – trust us, you'll know!

SX APPEAL

Merry Christmas chicks and chaps! Great magazine by the way! Just got a quick question for you – a small group of us are heading out to the States to watch a supercross in March and I was wondering what you know about getting hold of tickets in advance or if it's okay to get tickets on the door?

Chris, via email

Hmmm, first off an apology for being a bit slack with the reply to this Chris – good job you're not heading out until March, eh? Some SXs you should be able to get walk-up tickets for no sweat but then again some will more than likely be sell-outs so to be safe rather than sorry have a look at www.amasupercross.com and check out some advance deals...

UPGRADING

Firstly I'd like to say I'm a keen reader of DBR. I buy your mag just about every month. I am 13 and around seven stone and am looking to upgrade to a SW85cc. I am wondering which one would you suggest for me? I am not the most confident rider and would like something reliable and not too snappy.

James, Jedburgh

Not too snappy? What about a labrador? Sorry James, The Bear cracked that one! We're assuming you're buying second-hand so with that in mind our advice is go for the bike you can afford that's in the best condition – don't worry about makes or years. There won't be a huge amount of difference between what's available when it comes to power delivery so you need to work on improving your skills and with improved skills comes extra confidence. Good luck...



SHORTY!

First off I'd like to say a big well done for the mag as it's awesome! Also I'd just like to say a quick thank you to my nan and granddad for randomly subscribing to DBR for me – I'll definitely renew it when it runs out! But, yeah, back on point. I've just moved up to a 250F from my 85 and I never thought having short legs – which runs in my family – would be so annoying! I'm an average-sized 16-year-old lad but I struggle on my 250 because of my tiny legs! I was wondering whether you guys could help me out with stretching my legs?

Thanks guys and keep up the good work!
Danny, Dagenham

Short legs run in your family you say? Boom tish! While stretching your legs may not be impossible it's going to take time, a few operations and be bloody painful too so why not take a tip out of Godfrey Walker's February column and reduce the seat height of your 250F instead? Seeing as you've got such an awesome nan and granddad you should have the issue in question but if heavens forbid you've lost it then go to www.dirtbikerider.com and check out the Digital Vault. If you don't fancy the suspension mods then at the very least you can cut down the seat foam...



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk
All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.
Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of **Etnies Number shoes**.



EL OF A KNIGHT!

After missing the opening round of the Indoor Enduro World Championship, David Knight will be looking to show his rivals who's boss as the series rocks up in Barcelona for round two. Also rocking up in Barcelona for round two will be DBR's Deputy Dawg Suttly who may even sink a round or two while he's out there – find out next month...

PLUS FREE STICKERS!



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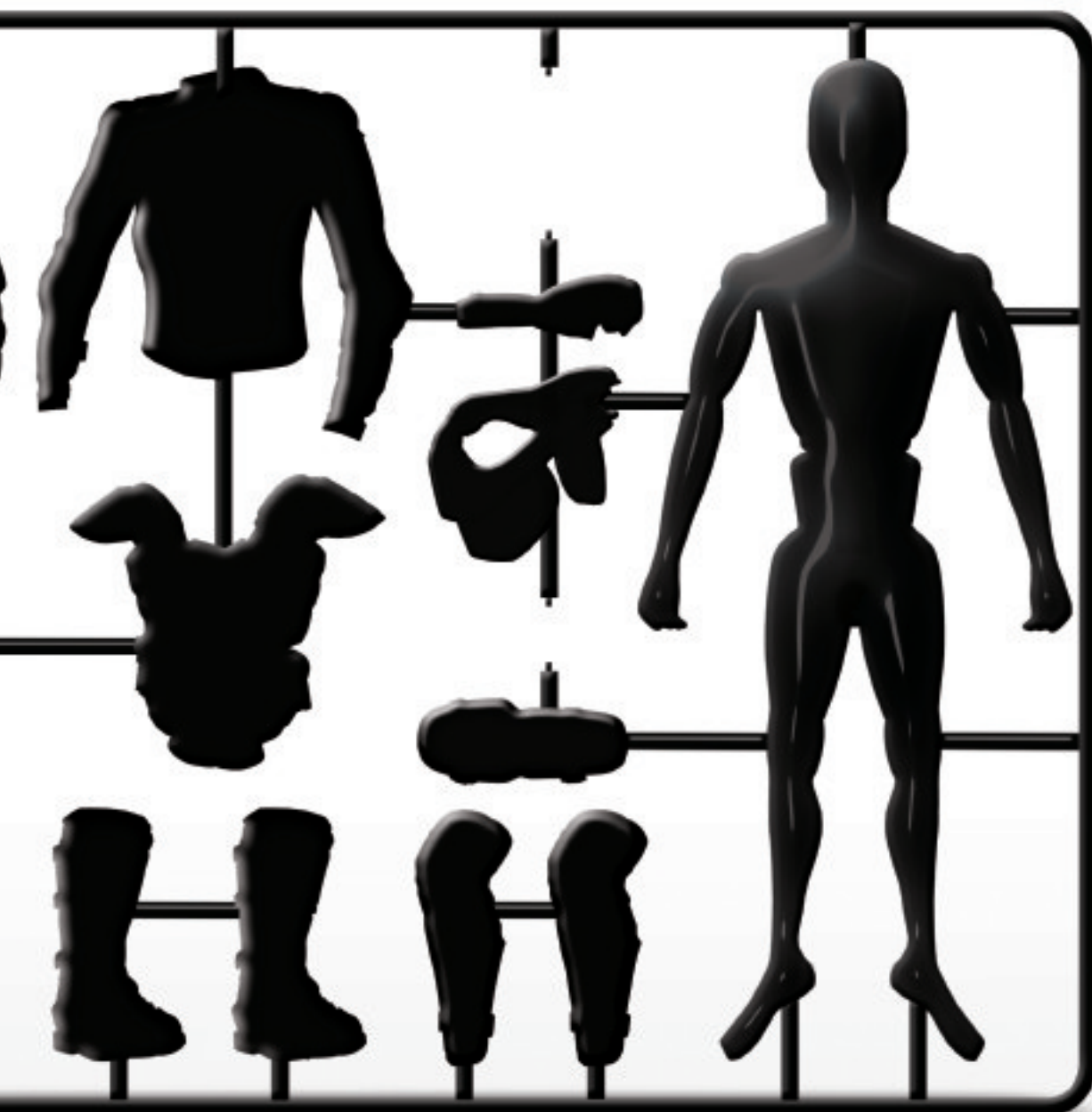
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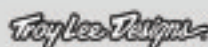
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Shaun, REBORN!

**AFTER TWO DISAPPOINTING YEARS WITH THE FACTORY KTM TEAM
SHAUN SIMPSON'S GOT HIMSELF A NEW RIDE IN A NEW CLASS...**

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Ray Archer



For a select few it's almost inevitable, for just a handful more it's a hard-fought goal and for the rest of us it's nothing short of a distant dream. If you want a world title then the chances are you're going to need a factory deal and if you want a factory deal you're going to need levels of talent and determination bordering on the supernatural.

Shaun Simpson has huge amounts of both talent and determination and after four years clawing his way up the world rankings from #44 in 2005 to #4 in 2008 (via #34 in '06 and #24 in '07) he also had a ride on the all-conquering KTM factory MX2 team. When I last sat down with him at the end of '08 the Scot was eagerly

anticipating his first season as a member of the orange elite. This time around, after two seasons plagued by injury, the KTM deal may have gone but the drive and enthusiasm – perhaps tempered with a little more worldly wisdom – remain the same on the eve of his switch to MX1 with the Belgian LS Honda team.

"I'm really looking forward to it. It's a new team, a new bike, a new challenge. I've got a new house in a different area and different people around me. Ken De Dycker is going to be a good team-mate. He's a real quiet guy but I've spent a bit of time with him BMXing and doing a few things like that and if you get to know the guy you can get along with him. He's very down to earth and I'm excited to be working with him

and some of the sponsors we've got on board.

"I'm looking forward to riding my bike again and feeling happy and riding with a smile on my face. And I'm going to try and mix it up and do more racing – when I was younger if we weren't racing on a Saturday in Ireland and a Sunday in Scotland and then a Monday in England if it was a Bank Holiday there was something wrong. We went from doing all that to just doing GPs so this year I'm going to do the Belgian championship, the first two British and the last British plus the first two Red Bull Pros and the Hawkstone International. I've not done a Red Bull Pro Nationals before and I haven't raced the British championship since it changed to a three-race format so I'm excited to be doing that."

Shaun puts the LS Motors Honda through its paces on the outskirts of Lommel in Belgium



Although he's still young enough to race MX2, Shaun's decided to move up a division and try his luck in MX1. It's refreshing to hear it's a decision made through choice, not necessity. And after listening to Shaun it's clear he's confident he's chosen wisely..

"To begin with I decided to go MX1 but there were lots of deals. I was quite surprised – I would have said there were three possibilities in each class. But when I weighed them up I decided that 450 was going to be better for me and the Honda was a nice bike I've rode before and I know it's good. Without much tweaks on a 450, get the suspension right and you're going to be there or thereabouts. Desalle's proved it with top three in the world, Pascal Leuret's proved it – when he rode a privateer Honda just him and his brother rocked up at the races and he was on podiums and that's what I want to do.

"In MX1 let's say there are a possible 12 guys who can win a race and I count myself as one of those. I'm not going to say I'm going to win the championship or I'm going to be top three – I just want to give 100 per cent and from what I feel I don't see why I shouldn't finish in the top five every week and that's going to be my goal. To keep finishing top five every week, to have podiums and just to have fun again. Y'know, I kinda lost a bit of the fun out of my riding over the last couple of years due to me putting pressure on myself and not doing as well but training harder and just not getting the results I wanted."

>>



Shaun

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KTM – WHAT WENT WRONG?

GOOD TIMES, BAD TIMES...

For a factory team as hungry for success as KTM, falling short isn't an option. Back in October our pint-sized Portuguese pal Nuno Laranjeira hooked up with Race Director Stefan Everts and it was fairly clear back then that the writing was on the wall for Shaun.

"With Shaun things have not been easy," admitted Stefan at the time. "He has his way of doing things and also his family believes it's the way he should go. I tried hard at the beginning and I felt that I should change my approach also but it doesn't work and I feel sad about it. Part of my job in KTM is to help the riders and I feel sad when they don't need my advice, I've had so many experiences in my days and I believe that I can help them. If they don't want to listen it is a pity for me but it's their decisions and their careers so I respect that, what more can I do?"

The Simpsons have always been a tight-knit family and from Stefan's comments it appears this 'closeness' may have come between Shaun and the KTM machine. But it's a closeness that has reaped great rewards in the past and it's also the way Team Simpson have always approached racing right from the days when Shaun's dad Willie was a GP privateer.

"You only have to look at my past and how we've done things as a family and as a small 'team family' from when I was a kid," says Shaun. "We put everything in the van together, we went to the races together, I was riding, my dad was spanningner, my brother was helping, my mum was cooking. It was the same in Roger Magee's team. We ran that team when I was the main rider because I was the main focus of that team. All credit to Roger for giving me that chance but we made it happen in that we put in the work and the time just the way that we'd always been doing it.

"Then the factory team was such a big step. I didn't have to do my practice bike, even wash my boots. It was stupid things. I was used to cleaning my helmet, my boots, working on my bike – in the factory you weren't allowed to do things like that. So I had more time on my hands so I thought 'I'm going to get really, really fit' and I went running and cycling and then I was doing too much.

"The LS team is smaller but it has all the good things you need in a team – good suspension, good bike, good people around it and good sponsors. It's run on two riders, two mechanics, a chief mechanic and a team owner and that's it. KTM's got carburettor guys, two or three suspension guys, engine guys, a chief supervisor, Stefan Everts as team manager, Pit Beirer on top of him. For Musquin and Herlings, maybe they don't know much different – and Everts as well, from a very early age he was on the best stuff with the best people around him.

"There was no way I was ever going to say that I didn't want to be part of a factory team – it's everyone's dream – and I had some good results but had some really bad times with them as well. So let's move on to the next chapter of my life in MX1 with a new team and a new bike. I'm really excited about everything and I think you've got to be excited about your racing and your riding to do well. No-one can be down in the dumps and win a championship – you've got to be smiling!"

Brother Stefan will be spinning the spanners again for Shaun in 2011



The last two seasons as a factory rider weren't kind to Shaun who on the back of his success in 2008 went into '09 as KTM's #1 hope of the MX2 world title. After a solid if unspectacular start to the season he took his first GP race win of his career and backed it up with a third second time out at Valkenswaard – then badly broke his leg practising for the following GP in Portugal. Already no stranger to injury, it was by far the worst knock of his short career and effectively ended his season.

"I regret I couldn't have got KTM better results. With what I felt I had inside I feel I could have been world champion and if I didn't feel that it would have been stupid. Cairoli went to MX1, Tommy and Tyla went to America and I was the next guy in line along with Aubin to be the guy up front. All credit to the other guys for stepping it up but I didn't make those results happen through no-one's fault really and that's the only regret."

Onto 2010 and Shaun clearly wasn't on song all-season. A shoulder injury and other fitness problems plagued him for most of the year and just one podium finish in Spain saw him end the year eighth in the world and out of sync with the culture of success at KTM.

"Last year I didn't do nearly as well as I should have. I should have finished top three easily. But it didn't happen. Eighth in the world isn't bad – if someone had offered me that five years ago I would have took that – but from what I know I have inside and what I gave compared

to what I produced? Often I was up the front and dropped back due to fitness issues and blood problems and things that I don't really want to get into. I gave 100 per cent but it wasn't what I believe I can do.

"Looking back although it's been two years of my life where I could probably have done more I can only learn from it. I'm not as young as some of these young guys but I still feel like I'm young in my career and that over the last two years I've learned more than I have in the five years prior to that. With training, riding, bike set-up, with how to deal with people, with pressure – all these things. And if I bring all that into this year I can't see why I can't have fun again and do something good and special."

After two years of fighting to be fit Shaun looks in great shape and has taken time out in the off-season to get one or two pressing medical matters taken care of.

"Everything's feeling good. We had surgery on my shoulder three-and-a-half months ago and I went back to the surgeon in Germany to see if everything was okay. He's solely a shoulder specialist, he only does shoulders. I asked him to take the pin out of my leg as well and he said 'I don't do legs, I just do shoulders' so that's kinda cool – you know he knows his stuff – and he's done a good job and my shoulder feels great.

"And six weeks after I had my shoulder operated I had the metal removed from my leg from 2009. To be honest that was a four or five-day job, just walking around slowly

>>

The Scotsman's relishing the chance to race a 450



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After a couple of off-season ops Shaun's "all serviced up"



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Shaun

before I got back to normal. Everything feels good and I'll go back for a check-up as soon as I'm back in Belgium with the guy who did that. So everything feels good and I'm all serviced up ready for the year."

Our latest interview takes place against the glamorous backdrop of the Lancaster Holiday Inn car park, a stone's throw from junction 34 of the M6. After a number of failed attempts to hook up with Shaun over the Christmas break we manage to finally get together as he lead-foots it down to Dover for a midnight ferry crossing before a morning rendezvous with his mechanic brother Stefan at Dunkirk. After that it's off to their new house in Lommel in Belgium where they'll be based for the coming season.

The foul weather that gripped Britain over the festive period and stopped Team DBR heading up to Shaun's Scottish home also meant that he's had little chance to get out on his new mount – hence the hurry to get to Dunkirk and

break out the red fo-fiddy.

"I'm not normally a big fan of riding over Christmas and New Year when it's wet and we've had some really s**t weather but I would have liked to have got out a little bit more in the time I had at home. I've had just over two weeks since the New Year and I'd like to have got out two or three times a week but obviously with the tracks being closed I've only managed to get out a couple of times. But I'm not too stressed – the pre-season internationals start two weeks later than they normally do so that gives me extra time. So I haven't done much riding but it's not affecting me and as soon as I'm back in Belgium I can start and go as hard as I want.

"I've not had a lot of time on the 450 Honda yet but I have got experience – at the Nations in '09 I rode a 450 KTM and I did some riding before the Nations on that and most of 2010 I had a 450 practice bike which I used two or three times a month, basically whenever I felt

like it. It's not something I've been unused to – even in 2006 I had one to practice on – and by 2007 I had an idea to move up to the 450s but then we got a deal with Kawasaki and I stayed in MX2 and every year after that I sorta felt like I had something more to prove on a 250 as I got better results but I've always felt deep down that I'm an MX1 rider.

"I think most people would agree that with my style and way I like to ride a bike pulling high gears, using the torque – more smooth – that I'm suited to MX1. On the 250 I really had to hang it out and quite often I crashed. And my weight is more than some of the young guys coming through. I was still getting out the start on a 250 but I think the 450 will suit my style better. I can pick the lines I want to use instead of going in tight and then out wide and missing the bumps and things like that so I think the 450's going to suit my style good."

Despite his Belgian base and decision to race the Belgian championship – "I have made a commitment to do the full Belgian series because it's a Belgian team and they really wanted me to" – Shaun's old-school determination to race as often as possible means British fans will get plenty of chances to see just how well the 450 suits his style, starting with Little Silver in Devon at the beginning of March. And after making just the one, brief appearance on home turf last season when he was injured early on in the first race at the Hawkstone International it's a prospect he's clearly looking forward to.

"It's nice to come back and be in your own country, speak the same language and see some of your buddies at the weekend and some of that we've lost the last couple of years by just racing abroad all the time. It's nice to be back and to have a bit of banter."



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At 31 Swordy's gone from being a young gun to an elder statesman – but he's still quick enough to win titles



R a z o r S H A R P !

WITH HIS 2010 TITLE HOPES WIPED OUT BY THE EPSTEIN-BARR VIRUS, FOUR-TIME BRITISH CHAMP STEPHEN SWORD STARTS THE NEW SEASON FIGHTING FIT AND LOOKING GOOD FOR TITLE #5...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

There are certain landmarks I use to map out the passage of time. Some are purely personal – first kiss, first attempt at getting served in a pub, first successful attempt at getting served in a pub etc – but having gone straight into working life at 18 with T+MX many of my landmark moments are professional ones that, inevitably, centre around motocross.

At the ripe old age of 41 I can still cling onto a thin thread of credibility with DBR's freestyle fans by boasting about being mates with British FMX pioneers Chris Brock and Jamie Squibb right from the beginning which, if my failing memory serves me right, was about the same

time the teenage terror that was Billy MacKenzie burst onto the adult scene at a British championship round at Hatherston Hall. But, even earlier than that, I was there at Whiteway Barton in 1997 when a fresh-faced Stephen Sword scored his first British championship podium.

Talk about a famous day in British MX history – the first podium finish for Swordy, the stand-out British rider of his generation and up to now a four-time British champ who's heading into the 2011 season with every chance of adding a fifth title. Of course, knowing I was there at the start makes me feel pretty damn old – although not nearly as ancient as I'll feel when he does finally retire. So lucky for me the recently-turned 31-year-old ain't done just yet.

>>



Swordy puts in the hours in the saddle - he's aiming to trade in the #2 plate for something a little smaller this year

Fighting FIT!

STAYING IN SHAPE WITH SWORDY...

Interview by Dickie Dye

"Racing at national and international level, you're bound to have a couple of 'biggies' each season. It's an occupational hazard. Once you get over this and just accept it you can crack on with the job in hand, try to avoid the crashes and when they come hope they're not too destructive on your body and make sure you're in good shape so you bounce back as soon as possible. It's all part of the reason I train and prepare.

"My training has changed a little. I've tailored it slightly to a routine which I can realistically maintain for the foreseeable future. I've built a solid strength and fitness base over the past years and I now need to push hard in the winter, reach as high a level as possible, then maintain this through the season.

"I'll begin the 2011 season in the best condition of my life. It's the first time for many, many years I've been lucky enough to have dodged the preparation gremlins which have haunted me in the past. My cardio is great and I think I'm the strongest I've ever been. I have a programme which will allow me to peak physically and mentally at just the right time.

"Up to Christmas we trained consistently and very hard. DT's all push-push-push and that's just what I need. I've been training with Dave for many years and we've done it all before and we are under no illusions what we have to do in 2011. We've all learned a lot from last year and the whole team is way, way ahead of where we were at the beginning of last season.

"This whole preparation time is hard – it has to be hard for it to be worthwhile. Most racers know they should be training and preparing for the coming season. They know pretty much what to do and how to do it but it's so easy for routines and schedules to be disrupted and upset by the weather, injury or mild illnesses like flu. Some start off with the best intentions then it all fizzles out. We can't afford to let anything fizzle!

"Dave has a great group of racers who all want to work hard and we motivate and push each other on. It's always been the same. We turn up, do as we're told and go home. Everything is simplified and the information we're receiving is coming from someone who has been where I am right now. With DT we have a complete preparation programme which begins in November and continues until we sit on the line in March for the first round of the British championship.

"A typical training day for me begins about 6am and it then takes me just under two hours to get to Exmouth where it all happens. I like to beat the traffic on the motorways which allows me to relax a little before training begins. We usually meet in a car park and start with a cycle which is about 50/50 road and off-road. I set off at a timed interval in front of or behind the others. Based on my usual performance it's somewhere towards the back of the pack depending on who is riding with us, then I play catch-up for an hour or so. The group is so competitive you can't back off for one moment and some of the other guys who train are really good on their bicycles.

"If the intervals are right we all usually get back to the car park at around the same time and as the pack closes up and we can all see each other the last couple of miles are brutal. It's tough but fun. Since my

ankle injury a few years ago I can't run so to improve and maintain my cardio I know I have to put more effort into my time on the bike.

"We then go straight to the gym and work on different muscle groups. Sometimes we do hard and heavy sets to build up strength but they're mixed with lighter, higher rep sessions to give us the endurance. We do circuits and move quickly from one station to another, then we have a break for lunch and a snack. After lunch we often go back to the gym and do another weights circuit focussing on different muscle groups again then we often go to the pool and do lengths with push-ups on the poolside slotted in at intervals once again.

"This has always been roughly how my pre-season preparation has gone although this year I've been doing this for the past few months religiously at least three days per week, then working at sessions at home in between at my local gym or pool or out on my bicycle. I've never really lacked motivation to train because I enjoy it but training with this group this year is extra hard, fast and competitive.

"We started riding training at the beginning of January. It was wet and hard and I know it will take a while to get back into the groove but soon the whole package will come together. I have been riding maybe two or three times over the winter but in January we started doing proper sessions and once I'm back up to speed I'll start working again on different aspects of my riding.

"I think my age is an asset right now. DT was not much younger than me when he won his third world title and the experience I have is invaluable. I know the races this year will be hard and fast but that's how I like it. I will be ready."



K a s o r
C H A



Swordy battled all season with eventual Maxxis champ Evgeny Bobryshev



In his 'play room' at home on the outskirts of Swindon

A pre-season interview with Swordy has become a bit of a tradition and over the years I've chased him around as he's moved from the South West to the South East and back again. Now he's settled down and started a family with model fiancée Jodi Oram the last few times we've hooked up have been at his home on the outskirts of Swindon. And with 22-month-old son Ayrton bombing about on his toy motorbike and another nipper due in late summer, it's very much Swordy the family man who greets Nuno and I when we roll up on a bright January morning.

Last year was supposed to mark Stephen's triumphant return to MX1 on the back of a dominant domestic season in '09 that saw him claim his fourth British title. Newly-signed to the CCM factory team alongside long-time friend Tom Church and with long-time mentor Dave Thorpe at the helm, he was sitting pretty for his second tilt at the 450cc class title after 2006's injury-destroyed campaign on a factory Kawasaki. Ultimately, the record books will show that Swordy fell short and that the 2010 title was won by Russian newcomer Evgeny Bobryshev – but the record books only ever tell part of the story.

Truth is that Swordy was already struggling before the opening round of the season at a rain-lashed Little Silver in Devon at the end of February. He didn't know it at the time but he'd contracted the debilitating Epstein-Barr virus

that depletes energy stores and leaves sufferers feeling constantly drained.

"Looking back now I probably had it in January but didn't realise and started driving myself into the ground. It was diagnosed in March the week before I went to Bulgaria for the first GP. I said to Dave that I wasn't feeling well and hadn't been feeling well at the first British rounds. So I went and got checked out with blood tests and saw a specialist guy in London and he diagnosed me. I told Dave because I didn't want to look like I was riding bad or whatever so the team understood from the beginning. I was knackered – I couldn't even get up in the mornings."

The team's initial goal in the world championship was to get Swordy inside the top 15 but with this out of the question it swiftly became a damage limitation exercise as they sought to maximise the efficiency of their below-par rider.

"To cut a long and tedious story short it was months before I could get myself back to where I wanted to be and had to sacrifice the world championship – CCM's main goal was to win the British and I couldn't do it all. I couldn't do two days riding but I could manage a British round pretty much because it was one day and shorter races so that's what we did. Prioritised.

"There was nothing special I could do for a quick fix, I just had to ride it out and get my immune system back up. But you have to >>



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Family Guy! Relaxing at home with Jodi and Ayrton



Swordy's going into the 2011 season in great condition after an unbroken winter training schedule

rest to do that and in this game you've got to be fit which means you've got to be riding all the time and I was losing my edge – and if you've not got that edge then you're not going to win because you need to be right on top of the game.

"Once I knew I wasn't going to the GPs I was able to sort out a plan – make sure I got one good training session in here, a bit of riding in there, basically building up again. And as soon as I felt better I started winning some British rounds and got my confidence up and my speed up."

The new three-race format certainly worked in Swordy's favour with the shorter races giving him more time to recover but although even in a weakened state he was always a podium threat, Bobryshev still edged away from him every round. He didn't manage a race win until Foxhill at the end of July and by the time he took his first overall victory of the season at Farleigh Castle in mid-August he was 37 points behind.

Another overall win at Silverstone a fortnight later signalled that Swordy was back in the groove but he was still 33 points down on Bobryshev when he was denied a last-ditch try for the title when the final round at Hawkstone Park was rained off at the start of October.

"It would have been a lot tighter in the British in the end if I hadn't got ill but I can't say I would have beaten Bobryshev. He rode very well and

was strong every week. I wasn't surprised with how fast he was or how well he was riding but I was surprised by how consistent he was. He was consistent all year and I think the good results he had in GPs – he was banging in some top fives – made him feel really confident in the British which made it even harder for me because I wasn't even at the GPs."

After the disappointment of two no-scores in Bulgaria, Swordy made just one further appearance at GP level – at round 12 in Czech – and was rewarded with five points for a race two 16th. But even that appearance at Loket a week before his debut British championship win of the season when he was clearly almost fully recovered was a calculated risk.

"People were asking me 'why aren't you going to GPs if you've just beaten Bobryshev?' but after deciding how I was and how I was feeling I didn't want to risk going backwards. I was feeling good on the bike and feeling good training but I was worried that if I started doing it all again – all the travelling, the two days riding – it could make me feel worse. I was lucky not to have a lot of pressure from the team to make the decision to go to GPs and I probably got physically and mentally fitter knowing they were all right with what we were doing.

"I didn't like sitting at home watching it on telly resigned to the fact that the GPs were over but it was the right thing to do. Epstein-Barr >>

Striking a catalogue pose with team-mates Maarten Cremers and TC





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Racing to his first overall of the season at Farleigh Castle



Time for a team talk from Dave Thorpe



is difficult to handle. You don't know when to stop – you have to listen to your body but at the same time you know what you need to be doing to be fast on the bike. I wouldn't want to break any more bones because that's just a nightmare but at the same time with a broken bone you go to the doctor, he fixes it and tells you how long it'll take to mend and that's it."

After a greatly abbreviated GP season – TC also sat out two-thirds of the campaign – CCM will be concentrating on racing predominantly in the UK in 2011 alongside developing a new bike which we can possibly expect to see towards the end of the summer. With a one-year contract with CCM and an option to extend it a further year, does this mean Swordy's given up his world championship dreams after over a decade chasing the biggest prize in motocross?

"Weighing up my age, where I am, what I've done, how I see the next three to five years, there comes a point where I can't do GPs. We're going to do a few but unless you're in the championship and in with a shout... I want to be up front and chomping at the bit and there comes a time when you've got to take stock, look where you are, where the GPs are heading.

"I see myself riding for another three years –

maximum five – competitively in the British championship and Red Bull series. I'm not making excuses but although I'm not married yet I'm as good as, I've got a kid and another one on the way and there are things I want to do and things I don't want to do and I don't want to travel all over the world again.

"Your priorities shift as you get older and there's nothing wrong with that. In fact it's smart to realise it and move on and do something else. CCM have given me a good opportunity to do that – they're a British team and they want to win the British and do as much as they can over here with myself and Tom.

"We came up a bit short last year by not winning the championship but we're in a much, much stronger position this January than we were 12 months ago so we're starting with a good base, we've had a good winter's training and it's all good. An MX1 title would be really good. If I do race for another five years I'm not saying I'm going to win another five titles but as long as I'm racing back here in England the British championship will be the main priority for me. It's a good championship and there's going to be some strong riders in it this year but that's good for me."

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Hello YELLOW!

**WHAT'S GOT EIGHT WHEELS, FOUR FRAMES
AND SHAGS JEFF PERRETT? WHY IT
CAN ONLY BE THE 2011 RANGE OF
SUZUKI MXERS...**

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Suttty

Y'know something, I think Suzuki should get a lot more credit than they do. Sounds a daft thing to say? Well let me explain...

What I'm getting at is that while Suzuki have won shedloads of championships over the years it's all too easy to argue – especially more recently – that it's been the riders of those bikes that have allowed Suzuki to punch above their weight. C'mon, Ricky Carmichael could have won on a tractor! He's the GOAT for goodness sake! They then

followed on the success of RC with the phenomenon that came along in the shape of Ryan Dungey.

But while both RC and RD are incredibly, sublimely and undeniably gifted pilots, to win the titles they've won first they needed the tools for the job – and Suzuki gave them the tools. And after riding the 2011 adult Suzuki range I reckon those title-winning tools are being handed out to the rest of us.

So let's start with the model that impressed me the most...



**Razor sharp response
and bags of torque mean
even tight corners can be
tackled in third**

RM-Z250

I can't tell you exactly what I said to the Suzuki crew when I got off this bike because it's a family magazine. But what I can tell you is that I was genuinely angry and upset because it really, really cemented home the fact that two-strokes have no real place racing alongside a bike like this. Not unless you truly like a challenge. This bike is so good.

I got straight off the 250cc two-stroke onto this bike and it almost made a mockery of the smoker. If I had stepped off the 125 it would be easier to accept the amplified quality of this bike but I hadn't. I stepped off a ripping 250 two-stroker in deep sand and compared to it the RM-Z250 made turning laps around FatCats seem less effort than pounding out laps on a PS3.

It was effortless. It took a sport I love for its required effort and sheer brutality and made it so much easier. Of course I understand racing is about results



*Just how good is the RM-Z250?
Good enough to break
Jeffro's ickle heart*



so anything to help those is a plus but the romantic in me was crushed. It tracked over deep ruts like they weren't there, even when they started to freeze. The response and power in the deep sand just pulled me through no matter where I was in the range.

From slow speed corners coming right off the bottom right through to top gear to the stop it just had it. It was like it was an automatic such was the effort it took to ride the thing. I don't think it has that raw power like the KTM or Kawasaki but I do think the transition through the range is smoother and therefore it feels easier to ride.

Last year's model was a great bike and with a few refinements Suzuki seem to have made a huge leap forward. The intake and exhaust cam timing have been revised along with the ECU settings and there's a longer exhaust. The clutch has improved lubrication (not that you really need to use it) but the one change that I believe has improved this bike so

significantly is third and fourth gears have been widened. With the razor sharp response and torque it felt like they were the only gears I really needed. Even in a few tighter corners where I may have dropped it down to second gear I just kept in third, threw it into the turn, rolled on the throttle without clutching it and went round like I was on rails.

I hardly had to shift my bodyweight either – that's why it was like being in my comfy chair. I just seemed to sit there in the centre of the bike with it doing everything for me. The chassis is beautifully balanced and the ergonomics allow you to shift weight around easily. Nothing feels too wide or too slim – well to me anyway.

Both front and rear Showa suspension units are smooth and I believe the spring rates are an ideal starting point for novice through to pro to tweak to your preference. It's just a quality, sublime motorcycle – period.

SPECIFICATIONS

RM-Z250

Capacity: 249cc
Bore and stroke: 77mm x 53.6mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Tank capacity: 6.5 litres
Front suspension: Showa 47mm USD (310mm travel)
Rear suspension: Showa (310mm travel)
Front brake: 250mm disc
Rear brake: 240mm disc
Seat height: 955mm
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Ground clearance: 345mm
Dry weight: 104.5kg
RRP: £6330

RM-Z450

Like its little brother the RM-Z450 is a fantastic motorcycle and like many older brothers it's rock-solid and dependable. I think the 450 is more about the sum of its parts – I wouldn't say it tops the polls if you break down each department of what makes a great bike but it's always close and consistent and that's the feeling you get when you ride it.

Remember this bike was the first EFI 450 so you could argue that Suzuki have had a little longer to fine-tune fuel injection on this beast – after all, it's the only bike with a tip-over sensor. Having said that they fell a little behind with the adjustment of the mapping. Well not any more as there are new mapping options – one richer and one leaner than stock that are easy to change with the connector unit and if you want to go more advanced you can with the Yoshimura tuning box.

To be fair there aren't really a great deal of changes to this bike. There's an increase in compression ratios which is a subtle difference if you concentrate hard enough to notice it and the intake and exhaust cams have new profiles. Last year's 450 found a lot more grunt than its predecessor but this time around it's been made that little bit more user-friendly really. Like the 250, it's super-smooth, ultra-responsive and oh-so easy to use and it doesn't scare you. And nobody needs a bike that scares them, especially in a sport where lack of confidence can cause you bodily harm. It has the same traits as the 250 but doesn't quite have that little extra spark.

One area where I reckon both of these bikes would be hard to beat is cornering. You really can cut some tight lines on these bikes and get them into the corners with minimal fight and because of that alone they bring great value. They are both confidence-inspiring bikes – if not the most powerful – so what you may lack in raw power you'll make up for and probably surpass with confidence and therefore speed. One small criticism I'd have of the 450 is the suspension units don't seem to be so in sync with each other as on the 250.

The front forks, although having a smooth action, dived a little too much for me and were too soft – particularly under braking – but other than that the RM-Z450 is a bike that makes you feel good in stock trim and you really wouldn't have to do too much to it to start riding well. Both Suzuki's four-stroke racers are light, nimble, controllable and above anything else confidence inspiring. That's why I believe they had more to do with RC and Dungey's success than they are given credit for.

SPECIFICATIONS

RM-Z450

Capacity: 449cc

Bore and stroke: 96mm x 62.1mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Tank capacity: 6.2 litres

Front suspension: Showa 47mm USD

(310mm travel)

Rear suspension: Showa

(310mm travel)

Front brake: 250mm disc

Rear brake: 240mm disc

Seat height: 955mm

Wheelbase: 1495mm

Ground clearance: 325mm

Dry weight: 113kg

RRP: £6433



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RM125

I know there are plenty of you out there who would love this bike testing gig but let me tell you it's not always as easy as you think – sometimes it takes discipline and self-control and here's why...

There I am warming up the little zinger staring out onto a perfectly groomed and rolled FatCats practice track that's as flat as a snooker table thinking 'flat sand track + 125 = a hell of a lot of fun'. I'm just about to click into gear with a smile already ear to ear when Rob Hooper leans over and says "you'll have to take it easy for a while, this one hasn't been run in yet". Arghhh! All I want to do is gun it right from the off, not just for the fun of it but because it was also so, so cold.

Anyway, after an open display of constraint and limbering up both myself and the bike I started to wind up the wick and it was well worth the wait. Whenever I ride a 125 it brings out a small, lingering regret – the fact I never really had a serious crack at racing them. When I came out of youth motocross I jumped straight on a 250 and the only season I raced one was towards the end of my career when I knew my better days were behind me and was racing more for fun and that's what the 125 offered me.

There is no way this bike can compare to or compete with a 250 four-stroke – especially as one as good as the RM-Z – but I still believe in my heart of hearts it should almost be compulsory for young riders to race a 125 before leaping onto a 250cc four-banger. It sharpens the senses, no question. I still think the feeling of getting a 125 on the pipe is a hard one to beat.

So what of it? Well, as 125s go this is a belter and let's be honest Suzuki have an incredible pedigree in this class as their 13 titles in the 125cc world championship testify (10 consecutive from 1975 to 1984 by the way). Just as with the RM-Zs I don't think it's the most powerful in its class but the whole package is sublime – right across the board Suzuki have one of the best chassis and suspension unions going and the two-stroke range is no exception.

With a 125 you really have to be able to put the bike where you want it and chuck it around like a one-night stand and with the Suzuki you can do that. Like the 450 I'd stiffen up the front forks a bit if I wasn't going to have full suspension tuning to suit my needs – something the serious racer should always consider (after all, there's no point having a ripping motor if the wheel is skipping off the ground).

The jetting was bang on for the day and crisp. Of course it wasn't as sharp as the EFI four-strokes because they are still running with a carburettor but the set-up was good. As much as Suzuki have improved their gearboxes down the years their shifting still doesn't quite feel as smooth compared to some of their competitors – I've always felt it was their Achilles heel along with clutch durability – but that's just a small criticism of what is otherwise a fantastic bike.



SPECIFICATIONS

RM125

Capacity: 124cc
Bore and stroke: 54mm x 54.5mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Tank capacity: Eight litres
Front suspension: Showa
Rear suspension: Showa
Seat height: 950mm
Wheelbase: 1450mm
Ground clearance: 350mm
Dry weight: 99kg
RRP: £4288



It won't live with a 250 thumper but the RM125 is still a sweet bike that'll put a smile on your chops





The RM250 is smooth with a good spread of power and great handling



RM 250

The RM250 completes Suzuki's adult motocross 'family' and to be fair the RM250 has always been a consistent performer. To this day I think the RM250 I raced in 1999 just scrapes it as the favourite race bike of my career. That was then however and this now...

Today's RM250 seems a little less aggressive out of the box – the motor is smoother and the power is spread across the range better. One thing I loved about my 1999 RM is that it turned on a sixpence – it was like it was designed more for supercross but I liked that because throughout my racing career I always tried to use lines that others wouldn't [like straight ahead into the bank off the start at Polesworth? – SL] and always looked for confidence in handling before power.

I know we're a decade or more on here but I like the fact that Suzukis have still got this trait of good cornering due to a good chassis with confident handling. A 250 two-stroke is and always will be where my heart lies so I loved riding this bike. Although it was smooth off the bottom I still had that wonderful challenge of trying to keep it under control like a lion tamer. That's why I love two-strokes – technique means so much more.

The power hit in a lot more in the mid to top range and I could really rev the nads of it at that level or pop up a gear and dare to hold on as I cut through the deep sand with ease. As for railing and bashing berms, well, there was no other bike on the day that I'd rather be on for that. Awesome!

The controls and brakes on all the bikes again followed suit. They were solid and consistent without being anything to blow your mind. The throttle, clutch and brake action were all smooth and light allowing you to concentrate on the track in front of you without distraction.

I enjoyed every model – certainly more than I did the five-and-a-half hour drive home – but it was a worthwhile day in the saddle. Or so I thought until I woke up the next morning feeling like I'd been comprehensively battered by Vanessa Feltz in a Greco-Roman wrestling match. I really do need to try and ride more regularly especially when there are bikes like these to test...

SPECIFICATIONS

RM250

Capacity: 249cc
Bore and stroke: 66.4mm x 72mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Tank capacity: Eight litres
Front suspension: Showa
Rear suspension: Showa
Seat height: 950mm
Wheelbase: 1465mm
Ground clearance: 350mm
Dry weight: 108kg
RRP: £4492



ALL GROWN UP?

COMBINING SUBLIME NATURAL TALENT WITH A SOMETIMES QUESTIONABLE WILL TO WIN, KRISTIAN WHATLEY HAS THE ABILITY TO ASTOUND AND CONFOUND IN EQUAL MEASURE – BUT NOW NEWLY SIGNED TO ROY EMBERSON'S SAMSUNG YAMAHA TEAM THAT COULD ALL BE ABOUT TO CHANGE...

Words by Jeff Perrett

New Samsung Yamaha signing Kristian Whatley has sublime natural talent on a motocross bike and an eye for a great race line – just like his father

Jeremy. Obvious comparisons are there to see but does Kristian have what it takes to fill his dad's shoes? In fact, does he even feel he needs to? Let's find out...

"I'm like a gypsy really," says a fresh-faced Kristian as we sit down for a spot of pub grub. "I've been everywhere, it feels like I know every road in the UK. I've just never settled down really. I left home when I was 17, stayed in Poole for a little bit, then moved to Norwich and just all over the place after that.

"I don't know why that is really, I just tend to go with the flow and do what feels right at the time without thinking or at least I always have in the past. But now I feel I just need to settle down, chill out, know where I'm at, have my trainer there, have good positive people around. I think that's the goal and this year will definitely be a good year for me."

It's fair to say that many people see the obvious talent of the 21-year-old but the same people could also ask questions at his desire to do well. Well, isn't he a bit too laidback, a bit too enigmatic – a bit, er, too much like his dad?

"It pisses me off when people get on forums and run their mouths when they have no idea as to what is actually going on in someone's life. Yeah, I know everyone has an opinion – I have plenty – but I just think sometimes they're best kept to yourself or a close circle of friends, especially when it's someone's career and they are clearly no better than you or have even been in that position. I sometimes want to write what I feel but it's not the professional thing to do because it's not the place to do it. The only way to stop it is to start coming good and start winning which I honestly believe I have a really good chance of doing this year."

Indeed he does because the talent

is there. Arguably the one thing that KW has been lacking is that one thing that plenty of us also have trouble mastering – discipline! Kristian, just like every young man growing up, has to find that balance.

"Maybe I do need some discipline you know? I had a couple of deals to choose from this year and I went with the one with less money with Samsung Yamaha because I felt I need that responsibility with Roy. My trainer Julian Clarke has been telling me I need more discipline for a long time and with Roy like he is I know I'm more likely to toe the line. I really thought about it and the idea of going to Samsung Yamaha and not doing well is good motivation. I mean who likes being told off?

"I know if I don't put in the work Roy won't mince his words with me so I've tried to be smart and go to a team where I know I have more chance to be focused on the job at hand. I want to win and I think sometimes a lot of people think I don't even give a s**t about it when I actually do. I think this move is a big stepping stone in my career."

It will be interesting chemistry between the laidback lad from the edge of the New Forest and the tell it like it is Londoner we know as 'Embo'. It's certainly a relationship I look forward to seeing develop and personally I don't think there's any middle ground with this one. It will either be spectacularly brilliant and dynamic or it will blow up in equal fashion. Time will give us the answer to that but how did it all come about?

"Roy was watching me at Farleigh using some of my special lines with Neil MacDonald who used to work with my dad when he rode for Action Workshop back in the day. Neil kind of bigged me up to Roy and got him fired up. It just snowballed from there and I'm glad that Roy's come in for me and offered me a 450 ride because I think it suits my style better. I've always preferred a 450 over a 250 since I first rode one.

"Last year wasn't as good as it was shaping up to be but I definitely

improved things at the end of last season. I changed a few things with my trainer like not talking about motocross in the week and staying at a hotel on a Saturday night rather than at the track. We just changed the whole routine and my frame of mind really. Come Farleigh Castle I was feeling good anyway and it's also one of my favourite tracks – it's much more old school and that's what I like.

"I was leading the first race and was away with it when the Maxxis arch came down on BryMac and they had to red flag it but obviously I rode much better at a time when Roy was thinking of his line-up for 2011 and I guess it was enough.

"Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed it at LPE Kawasaki and Steve James is a great bloke and I truly appreciate everything he and his team have done for me but I was struggling with bike set-up a little last year and it just wasn't working out like maybe it should. So once a couple of offers came along I weighed them up and tried to look beyond one year and at where I'm going in life for a change."

At 21 Kristian still has plenty of time left in his career to try and emulate and maybe exceed his father's achievements. Like Carl Nunn he has an abundance of natural talent and a famous father but these two attributes can be a monkey on your back as well as a blessing.

Expectations can be high and there'll always be comparisons like right here and now in this interview. So I asked Kristian how he feels about the pressures of racing in general, the fact some people think he's lazy and of course the 'son of a famous father' scenario.

"I've now started to feel I do have to prove myself to others and myself a little bit more. I'm sure there are people that don't like me and think I have an attitude problem but that's just the way it is, I am who I am and need to do what makes me happy and content. I'm not worried about what people think of me. There's no-one that I don't like in the paddock, I try to be friendly and speak to

>>



*Kristian's got the talent but
in the past his application has
been questioned*



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• PRO SERIES CNC FOOTRESTS



anyone and accept them as they are and I expect them to be the same with me. If not it's a problem they have, not me. Motocross at the professional level is a small family really and I don't want to fall out with anyone.

"As for comparisons with dad, I guess that was always going to happen and I can't control that. It's a good and bad thing and it's up to me to prove myself as a rider in my own right. Stefan Everts had the pressure of having a famous dad and he didn't do too bad did he? Not that I'm comparing myself to him talent wise. I know I can definitely do more than what I've done to this point which is why I've gone to Roy's team as I mentioned. I'm my own person and I'm comfortable with that.

"Naturally, I'm like my dad in some ways and like my mum in others but I think people only relate to the same traits I have with dad which is understandable. My dad is more 'nasty' than my mum, not in a horrible way but he definitely has that 'me against the world' attitude but I think that comes from years of racing because, let's be honest, once you are out there on the track it's up to you and you alone. I have a bit of that attitude but not as much as dad which probably frustrates him a little, especially when I'm being a bit more laidback like mum!"

I can't say if he bears any resemblance to his mum Karen when it comes to riding a motocross bike as I've never seen Karen ping a 60 foot tabletop or rail a berm with the grace of a ballroom dancer. But I do know the similarities between Jeremy and Kristian on the track are frighteningly similar.

For me watching Kristian ride for the first time was like going back 30 years to when I first starting riding, bopping around the ungraded and harsh motocross utopia that was Matchams Park. Back then in January 1981 Matchams didn't even have a designated track, you just

rolled up and blasted wherever you wanted to. I can remember it like it was yesterday, swerving around and flapping my way through the sand on my little YZ50 and every so often seeing this yellow blur fly around in my peripheral vision. It was, of course, a young Jeremy Whatley on his tricked out Heron Suzuki.

I was in awe and of course he instantly became someone I admired, even more so when my dad told me to park up, watch and learn – and learn I did. So not only has Kristian had the benefit of watching his dad ride on a regular basis he's also had the advantage of all that track craft and technique being funnelled into his lugholes to the point where it's all second nature.

"I'm not going to sit here and pretend dad hasn't played a major part in how I ride a motocross bike and pretend I figured it all out on my own. I can understand why comparisons are made because he's taught me so much. We've always worked on technique before speed really because if you're doing it right the speed will come. If you're doing something with poor skills or bad habits that will only get you so far and not only that dad raced two-strokes and I think that gives you a better appreciation of throttle control and finding lines. He put me on a slow bike for years and years or so it seemed and I had to work at making it go and getting it set up.

"We'd work on figure of eights and stuff like that rather than just pound out motos. If you're just out there doing motos of course you're going to get fitter but that will only get you so far – you have to work on technique as much if not more when you're young. Now a lot of stuff is second nature to me. I remember dad telling me when he was team-mates with Danny 'Magoo' Chandler they used to go out riding on Canford Heath and just play ride all day, virtually non-stop riding – pushing their abilities – and how much he learned doing that. >>



The late, great Danny 'Magoo' Chandler – Kristian's motocross hero



Kristian's 2010 season with LPE Kawasaki never quite took off



Kristian's dad Jem is a tough act to follow

KRISTIAN ON...

GPS

"I'd love to race GPs and have the opportunity that someone like Elliott has had before and Jake has got now. They've gained two or three seconds from doing that and I've yet to have the chance. Hopefully riding for Roy will make me see that jump in my career. It would be great to do it with Roy but if not hopefully I can ride well enough to get picked up by a GP team."

MARK EASTWOOD

"He's a living legend! I think I'm similar to him in many ways. We both just love to ride and he loves the old style tracks and what racing is all about. He knows a hell of a lot about bike set-up and how to work on his own bike. He's just motocross 100 per cent and knows so much. I admire him for speaking his mind too."

PIXIE LOTT

"I went and saw her at the O2 Academy in Bournemouth. I'm in love with her! I was drooling she's so hot. She came out in this PVC catsuit, you could see her knickers and everything. Well, not everything but you know what I mean..."

DANNY 'MAGOO' CHANDLER

"He's my hero. His video biography is amazing. I would've loved to have met him, especially after some of the stories my dad and Tim March have told me. He was a proper character and was allowed to be one – it's difficult to be like that now. It's difficult being professional these days because you can't be yourself as much as you could back then. I want to go to the tracks and be me. Then you could be yourself and winning was all that mattered."

RACING IN AMERICA

"It's always appealed to me but I've never had the money to go over there. The tracks seem to have the right balance of old school stuff like off-cambers, sweeping turns and hills and modern timing sections. They don't seem to go over the top with it. I see tracks like Washougal and Unadilla on video and I would love to race them one day."

SUNDAY, 20TH MARCH, 2011

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Picture by RICK BLYTH



TOP NAMES INCLUDE

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STEPHEN SWORD TOM CHURCH BRAD ANDERSON LUKE HAWKINS GERT KRESTINOV
CONNOR WALKLEY STEVEN CLARKE JAMIE LAW MAX ANSTIE BEN TOWNLEY
ELLIOTT BANKS BROWNE SCOTT ELDERFIELD GORDON CROCKARD MEL POCKOCK



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© Jeff Perrett

Kristian's hoping his 2011 deal with Samsung Yamaha will see him shine on a 450



Old school meets new wave – KW whips the 450 at Cusces Gorse



© Ady Cowshall

"Dad also made me realise the importance of understanding bike set-up. When I was a bit older and not ripping up the garden I'd come home from school and get straight in the workshop with dad and be out there until about 11 when I was told to come in because I'd got school the next day. Even when I was riding an 85cc I could strip and rebuild my own engine and change my own tyres. Dad would show me how to change a tyre and then take it off again and say 'go on then, put it back on'. If I couldn't put that tyre back on I wasn't going riding the next day.

"I can't remember exactly when I first started riding – I just remember messing about on a PW50 and Malaguti in the garden even after I went through the fence at the bottom of the garden a few times. I used to come straight home from school, grab some food and get straight out in the garden riding for hour upon hour until it got dark. We only lived a mile from Matchams so it was similar sandy soil once I tore up the lawn so I've pretty much grown up riding

Matchams sand! I started racing at Poole and Parkstone and got my first race win at Bere Regis and then I was away with it and the lawn had a bit of a chance to grow back!"

Clearly Whatley Senior has moulded Whatley Junior into the rider we see out on the track today but what I really like about that the most is Kristian's respect and attitude towards more 'old school' racing. Maybe it's the romantic in me? Actually there is no maybe, I know it is – but I feel that life's meadow in general was just that little bit lush around the time Jeremy Whatley was at his peak. KW may not have been born until 1989 but he definitely appreciates the era in which his father made his name and the style of track he made his name on.

"A lot of people were bitching about Farleigh last year but I love that track. It's a true motocross style track with flowing lines that lets you race. You wake up in the morning and smell the grass because there is grass! It's not all man-made. I know I have to ride these modern tracks because that's the era I live in but that

doesn't mean I'm loving them like I should. I believe I've got good timing and it's not like I can't jump but I like getting creative with lines and most tracks just don't allow for as much racing as they should. Farleigh may not have had all those jumps and obstacles but there was much closer, better racing which I think proved the point.

"Everyone could see the racing, there were much more inside-outside lines going on and it was rough. You had to think about it and be creative and to me that should play a huge part in racing, especially motocross. It's just becoming point and shoot with no real craft and I hate that. I think in my dad's era the tracks sorted the men from the boys a lot more."

I tend to agree with the charismatic young man sitting across from me and after talking to Kristian, a young lad I've known for some time, it's clear he's more sorted that ever before. He's a young man with his own opinions, a true gift and every opportunity to make a real name for himself – just like his father...

The pursuit of **PERFECTION!**

**OUR TECHNICAL EDITOR JETS OFF TO CALIFORNIA FOR
SOME SUN, SURF, SUPERCROSS – AND AN EXCLUSIVE
UK FIRST TEST OF KTM'S 350XCF...**

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **Shan Moore**

I have often wondered about the pursuit of perfection – the perfect wave for a surfer, the perfect shot for a golfer, the perfect track for a racer – and the conclusion I've come to is that the concept of what's perfect differs from person to person. What's perfect for me may be wide of the mark for you and vice versa.

I've been a test rider for the world's greatest off-road magazine for eight years now and I've loved every minute of all it brings to my existence. I guess over this time and through my many adventures and tests I have grown to lust after the 'perfect test'. In a perfect world I would like all our tests to be over a few days in different conditions with a blend of great riding and great photography to make the test great for the most important people – that's you lot, the readers.

And so, to my point. After a few conversations with my good friend Chris Denison at Dirt Rider mag in the USA I decided to book myself some flights and get out to California on another adventure. The lure of dirt biking in California never leaves you once you've tasted it and I have been drawn back there many times ever since my first taste in 1999 on Steve Peat's YZ250 around a gorgeous Glen Helen race track.

The thing about testing in California in January is the fact that you can find just about every condition in the book. Chris had a few plans for some adventures on my trip and although we didn't get >>



Brrrrrrrrraaaaaap!
Wakker cuts loose on
KTM's cunningly
tweaked 350XCF



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--EKS Brand goggles announces the release of the NEW **JOSH STRANG Signature series goggle**. The GOX Goggle is a product of over 25 years of eyewear experience. The world-class design of the GOX goggle has all of the necessary features that a high-end goggle requires to keep you seeing your way clear to the finish line.

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By meddling with the gear ratios
KTM have taken a great MX bike
and turned it into a great XC bike



to complete all my missions I will be going back to race later in the year and I will take care of the rest then.

The good thing about this adventure was the lack of a solid plan and that suited me just fine. Between Chris, Jimmy Lewis and Scotty Denison we were going to ride, surf, mountainbike, watch supercross and work. Imagine a day when you get up, the sun is shining, you eat breakfast, go surfing at Newport Beach, then sip a beer by the ocean before heading straight to Anaheim Stadium for round number one of the supercross season. A dream? Yes. But dreams do come true sometimes and this was one of mine which the Dirt Rider crew made a reality. Good times.

Could things get any better than that? Well it would be tough but it seemed they could...

The next day the work kinda had to start as it was off to Bean Canyon in the high desert with Chris, Scotty, Sticker Tod, Kyle Redmond, Factory KTM's Kurt Caselli and a few others for the ultimate day's riding and testing. And the test? How does a UK exclusive first ride on KTM's 350XCF grab ya?

The KTM 350SX-F was launched last summer and, as we all know, Tony Cairoli guided his orange, high-revving missile to the world MX1 title. Well there have been a lot of these sold to people who race off-road at three-hour cross country style events and although they are pretty good they are just not made for some of the unique types of going you find in these races.

My view on the 350SX-F is that it's a very fast 250F rather than a slower 450F. The revving style of the motor is great but in technical off-road situations it is well over-gearred for the low speeds involved and can make life difficult for rider, clutch and general enjoyment.

Now KTM could never be accused of sitting still when it comes to making bikes for every style of riding and racing. The two-stroke XC models arrived during 2010 offering tweaks from the full motocross versions and they have gone down a storm. But what could KTM do to prepare their 350SX-F for XC competition?

I have spoken to a lot of people who share my excitement at the prospect of such a machine. And in theory the project is exciting but the reality? Well, just one look at the lines and XC touches take this bike to a different level. But could this bike perform in every situation – from massive jump-filled motocross tracks to the high desert sand taking in all the streams, rocks, climbs and gnarly going in between? It was my aim to find out...

The bike fits when you first sit on it. Ass to peg height is good and gripping the bike is easy to help ease fatigue and aid more precise riding. The bars are a tad straight and low for me but that's personal. The controls as per usual are all fantastic – light and positive. Basically, if you find a hand or foot control to be wrong on most modern bikes it's only a small adjustment away from being perfect. From the first turn >>



Geoff rehearses for
his return to the UK

KTM 350XCF

XC TWEAKS

- ★ 18in rear wheel
- ★ Large capacity clear fuel tank
- ★ Side stand
- ★ Semi wide ratio gearbox
- ★ Six-speed
- ★ Electric start and kickstart
- ★ Handguards



The 350 is a great tool for the desert and only loses out to 450 power on really gnarly climbs



of the wheels the bike is ready to go wild.

There is a friendly power from the motor which is not arm-ripping but in no way is it slow. The engine on the XC is almost exactly the same as the SX version except for the semi wide ratio gearbox. KTM have worked the ratios in the gearbox so the motor needed no tweaking in the power department to pull each gear to its optimum from the very slowest going to the absolute flat-out stuff. And when I say flat-out I mean head-shaking, eyeball-rattling, flat-out stuff. The high desert is huge!

The bike pulled in every gear perfectly and although a lot of the desert terrain demands a lot of power the 350 with its fuel injection working well only felt like it was lacking in power on one or two of the massive hillclimbs where the slightly lower amount of torque compared to the 450s out there would allow the bike to lose grip and start spinning. To be fair I'm talking about massive, loose, rock-filled climbs – great fun to attack but not the kind of thing found in any races over here.

We covered a lot of ground over the day and at times we were riding through a couple of feet of snow. Fantastic terrain and amazing test conditions. The fuel economy was brilliant on the XC as we were killing it for hours and the fuel level was not racing down as you would normally expect with a carburetted bike. During the day I got to ride a carb bike and we were going so high it would actually run out of fuel and stop on the climbs as the air was getting so thin the demands for fuel delivery from the carb couldn't keep up. That's pretty wild going.

As with most of the bikes I test, the suspension was a bit soft. The bike has balance as it is but I would have to make a significant change of a couple of spring rates harder on the forks with a rate harder on the rear to keep the balance while allowing high-speed sections to be attacked. If I was riding the 350 in the USA the first aftermarket part I would be bolting on would be a steering damper to ease the butt-clenching moments while wide open. At the end of the day in the desert I had a great feel for the 350XC and I was not disappointed in any way with the only negative being the slightly under-sprung forks.

The second day's riding on the bike was again in the high desert just off Highway 15 en route to Las Vegas. The track myself, Kris Keefer and Chris Denison tested at was Racetown and it's an amazing place to ride. I nearly had a nugget at the size of a couple of the jumps and I was ready to use the good old 'it's a cross country bike' excuse if I didn't start nailing 'em but after a couple of laps the bike was taking the lead on the loamy dirt and everything was falling into place. The 350 ate the track up and inspired confidence for jumping and turning. What an absolute delight to cut loose on an amazing track and ride a bike as hard as it would go.

I started this feature talking about perfection and my search for the perfect test. Well this KTM 350XC test in association with Dirt Rider in sunny California may well be the holy grail of my career as a tester. But that won't keep me from continuing to search for perfection. That's my passion...

FANKS FELLAS!

CHEERS M'DEARS

With any trip like this you tend to find yourself relying on the kindness of others so a big thanks to everyone who smoothed my passage through California, especially Jimmy Lewis and Chris Denison at Dirt Rider and Scotty Denison n'all – any time you're down Marshfield way give me a bell and I'll return the compliment.

Battle of BRITAIN!

WITH THE OPENING ROUND OF THE MAXXIS BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP JUST A FEW WEEKS AWAY DBR'S DEPUTY DAWGER TAKES A LOOK AT 2011'S MAIN MOVERS, SHAKERS AND HEART-BREAKERS

Words and photos by Sully

The start of the 2011 Maxxis British Motocross Championship is now just a few weeks away and unless I'm trippin' it's looking like it's gonna be a good year for the ACU-run series which means it's gonna be a great year for UK motocross fans too. With eight rounds cunningly spread right around the country and 97-and-a-half grand in prize money plus four championship titles – MX1, MX2, MX2Y and Vets – up for grabs the action's definitely gonna come thick and fast.

So what's new for this year? The quick answer is not that much although with the Maxxis that's not necessarily a bad thing. The three 20-minute moto format is back again and seven of the eight venues are familiar family favourites too. In fact, the only things that are missing from the Maxxis mix this year are reigning MX1 champ Evgeny Bobryshev who's moved on to pastures new, the retired CAS Honda team who have won an amazing nine out of the last 10 MX1 championship chases and veteran campaigners Carl Nunn and James Noble who have both hung up their boots.

But with every space freed up by the retirees a new breed of hungry young, erm, youngsters are ready to step in and this year a whole heap of teen terrors are taking up the challenge so the 40 starting spots in both classes are full diddly full.

Reet, let's crack right on and check out the main movers and shakers starting with the MX2 division...

In my mind reigning champ Zach Osborne has to start as favourite to win the whole shooting match. The Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha team leader won 13 out of 21 motos run in 2010 and will be looking to do more of the same this season. Backing up the Fish n' Chips columnist (check out www.pulpmx.com) on the Dixon Yamahaulers will be Swiss superstar Arnaud Tonus who is no stranger to the Maxxis podium either as he scored a super second overall at Mallory Park last spring during a wildcard appearance. Considered to be one of the next big things in world championship motocross, if Tonus doesn't challenge for a moto win or two I'll eat Hodge's hat and, believe me, I would not like them apples. >>



Graeme Irwin moves up to MX1 on the three-fiddy



You can expect two-time MX2 vice-champion Jake Nicholls to be up to his little hairy apricots in the action in 2011



British interest in the British championship lies with two-time series runner-up Jake Nicholls who'll be out to regain the title for Roger Magee's HM Plant Red Bull KTM outfit who were looking to three-peat the MX2 last year following Woody and Swordy's wins from '08 onwards. There's no denying The Reverend's gotta whole lotta heart and there's definitely nobody who wants it more so discount the leader of the #45 herd at your peril. But Jake's not the only true Brit we expect to win a Maxxis moto or more in 2011...

Elliott Banks-Browne is really pulling all the pieces together right now and armed with a Pulse Racing DB Honda definitely has the equipment he needs to win races. I'd say taking the title is probably out of reach for EBB this year but if he keeps on keeping on anything is possible for this tenacious 21-year-old who apparently dislikes big spiders*.

Others in with a shot of glory are TAS Suzuki's Mel Pocock, MVR-D's Nev Bradshaw, Samsung Yamaha's Ray Rowson, Hooper Maxxis Suzuki's Steven Clarke and Kayne Lamont, Maxxis Henderson Insurance LPE Kawasaki's Bryan MacKenzie and the wildest of all wild cards – Lanes Kawasaki's Scott Elderfield. You do the math – add that lot up and that's more than a quarter of the field you wouldn't be too surprised to see stood

on the podium. To say this class is packed is definitely an understatement.

What the MX1 division loses due to the departure of Bobryshev, CAS, Nunn and Noble it more than gains with the exciting injection of KTM's 350 that'll be taking on the fire-breathing 450s. Leading the charge of the light brigade will be Proppa.com's Martin Barr and HM Plant Red Bull KTM's Graeme Irwin who are both moving up to the big boy division after racing MX2 in recent years. Both are Maxxis moto winners and considered a threat to be at the sharp end this year but can they really rock the establishment?

Buildbase CCM's Stephen Sword was Bobryshev's closest challenger in 2010 as PAR Honda's Brad Anderson found the weight of the #1 plate more than he could handle. But back in his favourite role of the underdog and also under the wing of Neil Prince who's popped over to join the PAR posse I think we're about to see the best Brad Ando we ever have. And for the competition that's effing scary especially if you can remember how dominant, relaxed and calculated Ando was back in 2009 when he won the Maxxis title quite easily. Two years ago who'd a thunk we'd have ever used the words Ando and calculated in the same sentence? Weird... >>



Swordy's got to start favourite for the MX1 title



BRITAIN
2011



*Above left: Defending MX2 champ Zach Osborne
Right: MVR-D Honda's Nev Bradshaw*



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Super-swift schoolie James Dunn will be aiming to make an impact in MX2



POT PICKERS!

A RANDOM SELECTION OF FANS SELECT WHO THEY THINK WILL COME OUT ON TOP...

Billy MacKenzie – Cobber

MX1

- 1 Jason Dougan
- 2 Stephen Sword
- 3 Brad Anderson

MX2

- 1 Arnaud Tonus
- 2 Zach Osborne
- 3 Scott Elderfield

Jeff Perrett – Media mogul

MX1

- 1 Brad Anderson
- 2 Stephen Sword
- 3 Martin Barr

MX2

- 1 Zach Osborne
- 2 Jake Nicholls
- 3 Arnaud Tonus

Jim Peters – Prize fightin' pimpmeister

MX1

- 1 Brad Anderson
- 2 Stephen Sword
- 3 Jason Dougan

MX2

- 1 Elliott Banks-Browne
- 2 Zach Osborne
- 3 Jake Nicholls

Nuno Laranjeira – Portugeezer

MX1

- 1 Stephen Sword
- 2 Brad Anderson
- 3 Martin Barr

MX2

- 1 Zach Osborne
- 2 Jake Nicholls
- 3 Arnaud Tonus

Sean Lawless – Slave driver

MX1

- 1 Stephen Sword
- 2 Brad Anderson
- 3 Tom Church

MX2

- 1 Zach Osborne
- 2 Jake Nicholls
- 3 Arnaud Tonus

Wayne Dobson – Industry insider

MX1

- 1 Stephen Sword/Brad Anderson
- 2 Brad Anderson/Stephen Sword
- 3 Martin Barr

MX2

- 1 Jake Nicholls
- 2 Zach Osborne
- 3 Elliott Banks-Browne

Philip Coulter – Blond bombshell

MX1

- 1 Stephen Sword
- 2 Brad Anderson
- 3 Tom Church

MX2

- 1 Elliott Banks-Browne
- 2 Jake Nicholls
- 3 Zach Osborne

Luke Plummer – PR guru

MX1

- 1 Stephen Sword
- 2 Gordon Crookard
- 3 Martin Barr

MX2

- 1 Mel Pocock
- 2 Zach Osborne
- 3 Jake Nicholls



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RACES IN PLACES

THE WHEN AND WHERE OF THE MAXXIS

ROUND 1 – LITTLE SILVER, MARCH 6

Situated slap bang at the southern end of the M5 – just past Exeter – this high-speed hillside circuit is one of the more weatherproof in the UK which makes it an ideal venue for the season opener. Last year's race was a bit of a mudfest due to weeks of heavy rain in the run up to the event but with more clement weather this time around and some drier track conditions the layout at Little Silver should coax some great racing out of the UK's leading riders. Remember, it's round one, all scores are even and there are bound to be some season-opener nerves floating around so absolutely anything can happen!

HOW TO GET THERE...

At the end of the M5 continue towards Plymouth on the A38 for one mile. Take the Kennford slip road then head across the bridge to rejoin the A38 in a northerly direction. Follow that briefly then take the first slip road signposted for Exeter and then take the first road on the right (just after the garage). The postcode for satnav users is EX6 7UD.

ROUND 2 – CANADA HEIGHTS, MARCH 27

After taking a year out from hosting British championship action Canada Heights is back on the Maxxis schedule for 2011 – woohoo! Undoubtedly the South East's premier motocross venue, the jump-filled hillside circuit is a favourite with racers and spectators who pour out of London and flock to the old army base in their thousands. A sandy base means the racing at the Heights is good no matter what the weather throws up but as much as we love seeing a gnarly mudder we're hoping that conditions are dry and fast for this one as that way the racing is guaranteed to be epic!

HOW TO GET THERE...

Get off the M20 or M25 at the Swanley Interchange – that's Junction 3 of the M25 and Junction 1 of the M20 – then follow the signs for Brands Hatch. On the roundabout underneath the motorway take the Brands Hatch exit, go straight over the next small roundabout and take your first left. The track is about a mile down there on the right. Postcode is BR8 8DX.

ROUND 3 – LYNG, APRIL 17

Situated right next to the sleepy village of Lyng, the sandy Cadders Hill circuit is one of the oldest on the British championship calendar and retains plenty of old-school charm but don't be fooled into thinking that the racing here's gonna resemble a snoozetastic classic scramble. As one of the fastest, roughest and toughest tests of man and machine on the Maxxis calendar, the race action at Lyng is always fast and furious and normally includes a big crash or two as the leading contenders push the limit.

HOW TO GET THERE...

The Lyng circuit is well signposted off the A47 between Kings Lynn and Norwich and the A1067 between Fakenham and Norwich. An NR9 5AL post code will deliver satnav users to the circuit safe and sound one way or another.

ROUND 4 – MILTON PARK, MAY 1

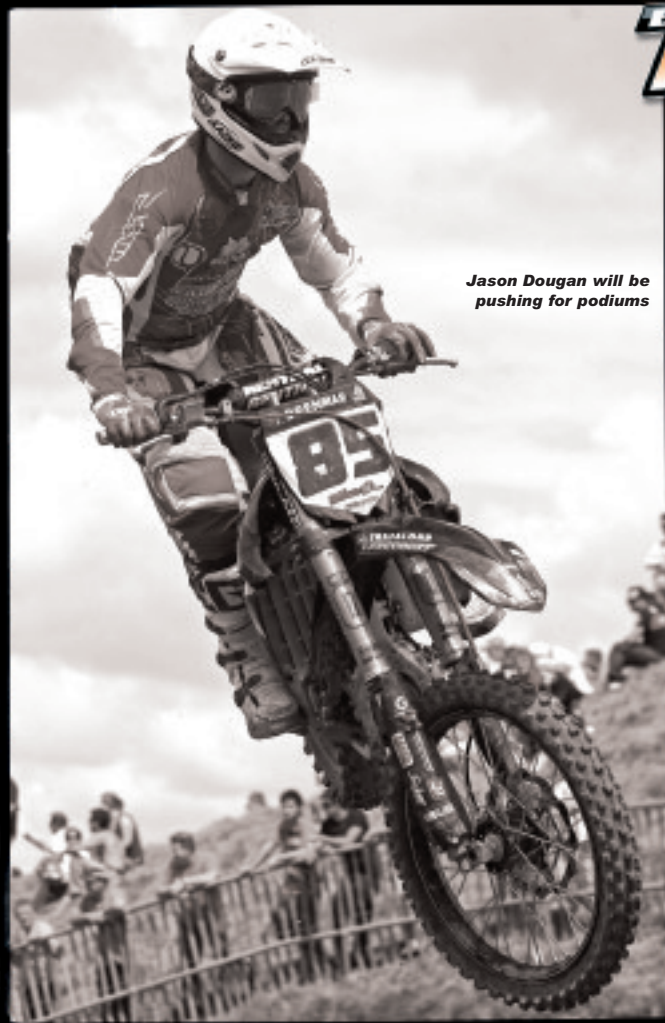
Completely revamped by the ACU, Milton Park – the track formerly known as Milton Malsor – is a brand-new venue for this year's Maxxis championship having successfully hosted the final round of the MX323 championships in 2010. Situated just a stone's throw from Junction 15A of the M1, this jump-filled hardpack circuit should be a favourite with South Midlands fans who've been starved of top flight race action for a good few years now.

HOW TO GET THERE...

From Junction 15a of the M1 take the A43 towards Northampton. At the first roundabout take the third exit on to Danes Camp Way (A45). At the second roundabout take the third exit heading towards Bilsforth. The circuit is a mile ahead on the left-hand side. TomTommers type NN7 3AP to reach your destination.



The awesome Duns track is back on the calendar for 2011



Jason Dougan will be pushing for podiums



TC's in the best shape of his life



Martin Barr moves up to MX1 with Proppa.com KTM

Swordy on the other hand has always been a thinker and after giving up on GPs in 2010 to concentrate on chasing his fifth British championship title (which he obviously failed to snatch) the Scotsman comes into this year virus free and fully focussed on one goal and one goal only – to get the British title at all costs to top off CCM's 40th year celebrations and no doubt pick up a fat bonus cheque n'all.

Swordy's team-mate Tom Church is also a strong candidate to lift that bonus cheque and the championship title too of course! A very experienced competitor, TC's probably in the best shape of his life, as focussed as ever and well supported by his wife Claire and the motocross mad Church family. A true enthusiast of all branches of the sport (he'll

be the first major MX star to take on a round of the British Sprint Enduro Championship this month), TC definitely has everything he needs to win his first major pro title, it's now just a matter of keeping it all together.

Another rider with all the tools but maybe not quite so much experience is Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha's Jason Dougan. Turning 24 a couple of weeks before the series kicks off in Devon, Doogs showed some real flashes of brilliance in his first full year on the 450 with his reward being fourth place in the series and another shot at GP glory in 2010. It's safe to say that Steve Dixon wouldn't waste his time – or money – on that project if he didn't see plenty of potential but the big question is can Jason turn that potential into domestic championship glory? >>

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The MX1 class is stacked for 2011 even without champ Evgeny Bobryshev

Behind the big five contenders – that's Anderson, Sword, Church, Dougan and Barr in case you weren't paying attention – are a whole heap of up n' comers including the aforementioned Graeme Irwin, Aprilia's Alfie Smith, Proppa.com's Nez Parker, Lanes Kawasaki's Alex Snow, Samsung Yamaha's Kristian Whatley, D3 KTM's Jamie Law and GP winner Gert Krestinov on the Maxxis Henderson Insurance LPE Kawasaki.

As well as the main MX1 and MX2 championships there'll be a sideshow at each and every round as the Veteran and MX2 title chases are fought out. While the Veterans might not be as quick as they once were you can still expect plenty of bar-banging duels from these seasoned warriors but the real ones to keep an eye on are the MX2 contenders.

The entry list is headed by south coast speedsters Jake Shipton and Bradley Pocock who between them dominated round one of last year's championship before hitting trouble. We can also expect to see James Harrison and James Dunn up there along with former 85cc champ Ryan Houghton. The MX2 series takes place at the Canada Heights, Lyng, Milton Park, Desertmartin and Duns rounds of the Maxxis while the Vets support the main classes at Little Silver, Foxhill and Hawkstone Park.

For more info on this year's Maxxis series hit up the official website of the British Motocross Championship at www.mxgb.co.uk.

★ For more Elliott Banks-Browne based trivia log on to www.ebbmx.co.uk

Former MX1 champ Brad Anderson relishes the role of underdog



EBB should be challenging for race wins



Alex Snow could spring a few surprises



ROUND 5 – DESERTMARTIN, JUNE 26

We're headed way out west for round three and that even means crossing the Irish Sea because Desertmartin's back on the Maxxis schedule after a two-year break. One of the toughest tracks in the series, Porter's Pit is a real rollercoaster of a ride with its many jumps, bumps and elevation changes checking the riders' skills to the max! If you're this side of the water it's well worth checking out the price of flights to Belfast International with Ryan Air and Easyjet because this is gonna be a race to remember – especially for local heroes Martin Barr, Graeme Irwin and Gordon Crockard.

HOW TO GET THERE...

Get yo' sen on the M2 that runs from Belfast to Antrim – right by the international airport – then continue west along the M22 and on to the A6. Follow the signs to Magherafelt (A31) turning left on to Broad Street. At the next roundabout take the third exit onto Rainey Street (B40) following the signs for Desertmartin and Draperstown. Turn right on to the A29 passing through Desertmartin before branching off left on to the B40 once more following the signs for Draperstown. Two miles after rejoining the B40 look out for a turning on the right – Rectory Road – and then turn down it. The Desertmartin circuit is 50 metres further along. Postcode popper-inners need BT45 5QW.

ROUND 6 – FOXHILL, JULY 24

Foxhill has provided some of the closest racing around in the last couple of years as the Swindon super venue returns to full strength following its enforced lay-off. A firm favourite with fans thanks to its great viewing, the Foxhill circuit the is super-fast, super-slippery – even when dry – and definitely favours the brave.

HOW TO GET THERE...

From Junction 15 of the M4 head north up the A419 to the first junction. At the roundabout take your fourth exit on to Purley Road (B1492) and follow this through the village of Liddington and up the hill until you cross over the motorway. Take your first left and then turn left again at the first crossroads. The Foxhill circuit can then be found on the right. Postcode is SN4 0DR.

ROUND 7 – DUNS, AUGUST 14

It's north o' the border for round seven as Duns hosts its third British championship round at this superb Johnny Douglas-Hamilton designed venue. Built on a slope this jump-filled circuit is super-fast and like Foxhill really favours the brave. Always immaculately prepped, Duns is definitely worth travelling to especially with the series titles on the line. Swordy and Ando were both crowned champions here in 2009 and both claim it as their 'home' round. Expect fireworks from these two as they battle for supremacy...

HOW TO GET THERE...

Heading inland from Berwick-upon-Tweed along the A6105 pass through the town of Duns, turning right at the sign for Longformacus and Duns golf course. The race track is approximately two miles along this unclassified road on the left – you really can't miss it. Because this circuit is out in the wilderness the nearest postcode (TD11 3NS) will leave you around a mile short of your goal. Just keep following your nose and you won't go wrong.

ROUND 8 – HAWKSTONE PARK, OCTOBER 2

Well known internationally for its hill, world champion-swallowing whoop section and relentlessly rough sandy surface, the infamous Hawkstone Park gets another shot at hosting the Maxxis season-ender after last year's damp squib got rained off before a wheel was turned. Host to some amazing battles in years gone by, expect the final round of this year's Maxxis to be equally as intense.

HOW TO GET THERE...

Situated slap bang between the A49 and A53 around 12 miles north of Shrewsbury, Hawkstone's easy to get to no matter which way you're coming from although mystifyingly it's never all that well signposted. I'd recommend hitting it up from the A53 side and if you're canny enough to find the roundabout where the A442 from Telford crosses the A53 you're almost there. Head south towards Shrewsbury along the A53 for a mile taking the second turning on your right which is signposted for Lee Brockhurst and also the West Midlands Shooting Ground. Turn up here and proceed with caution along the single file road for approximately two miles – the circuit'll be on your left. The postcode is SY4 4NA.



PRE-RIDE PREP!

BEFORE YOU HIT THE TRACK WITH YOUR BRAND-NEW DIDDLY DIRT BIKE THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT YOU REALLY SHOULD DO TO IT...

Getting a brand-new dirt bike – like our brand-new RMX450Z long-term test bike – is an awesome experience and anyone who's been lucky enough to get one knows just how tempting it is to head straight from the showroom floor to your favourite riding area. But before you do that it's well worth spending just a little time to pimp your ride...

One of the first things I like to do when I get a new bike is fit an hour meter. There are a bunch of 'em about on the market – costing around £35 – and they're super-simple to fit. I find them useful because they let you know exactly how long your motor has been running which means you're able to figure out exactly what maintenance needs doing when so you've got no excuse for not checking your valves often enough or servicing your suspension when it's due.

Fitting an hour meter is as simple as finding somewhere to mount it – the frame rails just behind the rad shrouds are ideal but check for clearance first – then running the small wire from the meter to the plug lead. Ensure there's a small amount of free play in the wire then coil the end around the plug lead four or five times. If your bike has no plug lead as such,

coiling the hour meter wire around the fat part of the ignition coil just above the rubber bung where it seals to the cylinderhead cover should work just as well. When you've done that run a bit of insulation tape around the coiled wire to secure it and Bob's yer uncle!

With that small task out of the way the next thing you should do is check all the fluid levels – that's coolant, gearbox and motor oil. Consult your manual – all new bikes come with them – to see what the levels should be and how to check them properly. Normally there will be a sight glass or sight hole for you to check the oil levels while the coolant level can be seen by removing the radiator cap which should only ever be removed when the engine is cool unless you like being showered with scalding hot fluid. Obviously, on this occasion everything will be stone cold but it's worth getting that message firmly imprinted in your noggin.

Now remove your seat and make sure that your air filter is properly oiled, properly fitted and also that the screw holding it in is sufficiently tight. KTM owners obviously don't have to worry about the screw but do make sure that the cage that holds the filter in place is properly aligned and clipped in.



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WALKER'S FIVE-MINUTE FIX!

AN ESSENTIAL THROTTLE TUNE-UP FOR FOUR-STROKE OWNERS THAT'S SO SIMPLE EVERYONE CAN MANAGE IT...

Check the pressure in both tyres – you'd be amazed how many dealers over inflate them from new – and while you're down there check the tension of your spokes. While you don't want them to be loose they shouldn't be over tight either so I'd recommend that you get a spoke torque wrench – Talon Engineering make the best one around – because that way you'll always know that they're right.

Chain tension is another item worth checking. Quite often the stock chain and sprockets on new Japanese machines are low quality items that are just about good for running the bike in before throwing them out. If you're not sure how tight your chain should be check your manual but a good rule of thumb is that you should be able to fit two-and-a-half fingers underneath the chain midway along the chain buffer on top of your swinging arm.

Finally do what I call a front-to-back check where the aim of the game is to make sure all the bolts on the bike are tight. Start at the front axle and work your way right to the back, checking pretty much everything on the way from bolt tightness to cable routing, handlebar clamp fitment, lever position etc etc. It shouldn't take you too long and definitely gives you a little peace of mind before you hit the track. 

If you've been riding through the winter in the mud and rain I can pretty much guarantee your throttle will be full of ****! I don't mean full of **** as in it's a compulsive liar but literally full of dirt and debris which can lead to all sorts of problems from an annoying heavy feeling throttle action to some seriously bad sticking flat-out funanigans which is definitely something you really don't want to experience.

For this five-minute fix you'll need an 8mm t-bar, a Philips screwdriver, some spray cleaner and a cloth.

To kick things off I undo the two bolts that hold on the front brake master cylinder even though it's not totally necessary. It does give you a little extra space to work and only takes 10 seconds so it's no big stress.

With that out of the way it's time to slide off the two rubber shrouds – the one that covers the area where your throttle cables enter the throttle housing and the other that covers the throttle housing itself. With them pulled back undo the two bolts or screws that hold the throttle housing together, split the housing and then remove it. Now disconnect the two cables from the throttle tube and slide the tube off the bar.

Clean the right-hand side of the handlebar where the throttle tube was situated. After you've given it a good spray with contact cleaner, pick up a cloth and wipe

away any remaining dirt and excess fluid.

Now take the two pieces of throttle housing and clean them inside and out. It's critical that you're super-thorough and while you're at it check for any damage – cracks and whatnot. Clean the rubber shrouds and cables, again checking for any damage.

The inside of the throttle tube normally holds a little dirt so give that a good cleaning out too. If you're using any solvent-based cleaning sprays make sure that the security of the throttle grip hasn't been compromised because you don't want that flying off while you're riding either. Again check for any cracks or damage and if your grip is split or ripped then you should change it.

When you're happy that everything is clean and undamaged you can start reassembly. I like to spray a light coating of lube onto the handlebar before sliding the throttle tube back on.

Reconnect the cable ends to the throttle tube, line them up to the two pieces of housing and then fit the throttle housing together. When you've got everything in place, tighten the bolts or screws then refit the rubber shrouds.

Refit the front brake and then test the throttle before you fire your motor up – it should feel nice and light as it rotates both ways. It should also spring straight back to the off position when released.

VICTORIOUS AT
HANKSTONE PARK,
TRAMPAS PARKER WON
KTM'S FIRST 125 WORLD
TITLE IN 1989

EURO HEROES!

AFTER HIS RECENT LOOKS AT THE SPORTING HISTORY OF MAICO
AND CZ, JACK KEEPS THE EUROPEAN THEME GOING AND DELVES
INTO THE KTM BACK CATALOGUE...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle



SHAYNE KING BEATS
JOELSMEETS IN THE
1996 FRENCH GP AT
PROMISSE + LANDS
KTM'S FIRST 500CC
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

A full 42 years after a European motorcycle manufacturer last copped both the world's premier motocross titles in the same season, KTM did the deed in 2010.

It was back in 1968 that Paul Friedrichs and Joel Robert doubled up for CZ. Another five years would pass before KTM's first motocross world championship points were scored but the Austrian company had been around for many years prior to entering the MX history books. Hans Trunkenpolz originally opened a metal repair workshop in Mattighofen in 1934 and became a dealer in DKW motorbikes three years later. Eventually, officially known as Kronreif Trunkenpolz Mattighofen (aka K-T-M), he commenced production of his own runabout – a 98cc BSA Bantam lookalike – in 1953. He also entered competitions and, a year later, KTM won the Austrian national 125cc road racing championship!

A first ISDT gold medal was won in 1956 and more off-road success followed but a crisis in the two-wheel industry forced KTM to cease production of everything except scooters and mopeds in 1959. They re-emerged after a four-year hiatus with the 'Comet' – a Honda Benly-like road bike – and entered their first ISDT works team in 1964.

Four years later they manufactured the 'Penton Six Days' for export to America and in 1970 commenced constructing the first KTM engines, Manfred Klerr winning the Austrian national MX title on their new 250. This success propelled the company into full-scale production of a 250 motocrosser and entry into the world championships where Soviet stars Pavel Rulev and Gennady Moiseev triumphed against the might of Suzuki and Yamaha in 1973, winning respectively the Italian 250GP at Serramazzoni and the Yugoslavian round at Mariboro on the distinctive red-tanked machines. And although Moiseev would win only twice in 1974, he sensationally seized KTM's first world MX crown at an inflammatory finale in Switzerland.

A bright-eyed, blond-haired little Austrian called Siegfried Lerner won the Austrian MX title in 1975 and began work on a revolutionary disc-valved 125. A year later KTM announced their arrival in 500 GPs when Belgian beanstalk Jaak van Velthoven won the final round in Luxembourg. Meanwhile, in a topsy-turvy 250 grand prix contest Moiseev, despite conquering the last three motos of the season in Holland and Sweden, lost the 1976 250 title by a single point to Husqvarna's Heikki Mikkola! Anatoly Ovchinikov won the Russian and Dutch rounds for KTM that year while third in the series – and victorious at Gaildorf – was Moiseev's

stocky, moustachioed mate Vladimir Kavinov.

The following year this duo, sporting the firm's new white livery, decimated the 250 world championship. Ice-blue-eyed Moiseev won six rounds including the double at Hawkstone Park and Kavinov claimed the Swedish round at Uddevalla and KTM's home GP at Schwanenstadt. And a cool young Belgian dude called Andre Malherbe made it a KTM 1-2-3 in the table, winning his first grand prix (of many!) at Beuerne in Western Germany. Van Velthoven this time lost a tiebreaker with Roger De Coster's Suzuki in the final 500GP as Finn Gote Liljegen swept an improving 125 to fifth in the world.

In 1978 'KTM America Inc' was established in Ohio while back on this side of the pond Gennady Moiseev claimed a 250cc world title hat-trick, his victories including the British GP at Kilmartin in Scotland. Kavinov triumphed twice and German Fritz Schneider won at Serramazzoni where it had all kicked off for KTM five years earlier! Meanwhile, development genius 'Speedy' Lerner raced to fourth place in the 1978 125 GPs and the KTM-mounted Russians climaxed their splendid season by stealing the MX des Nations at Gaildorf where Valeri Korneev and Yuri Khudiakov joined Moiseev and Kavinov to trounce Germany and Belgium! The same Russian KTM quartet snatched a stunning last lap triumph from hosts Sweden in a saturated 1979 Trophee des Nations and the first Frenchman to win a 500GP, Jean-Jacques Bruno, blazed his Katoom to victory at Beuerne.

KTM's Golden Era seemed over until in 1981 affable Italian Guiseppe Andreani claimed their maiden 125GP win at Goldbach in Germany. Come 1982 KTM introduced their new 'Pro-Lever' rear suspension system and reconvened as 250GP challengers when Dutchman Kees van der Ven won at Unadilla, Maggiora and Hyvinkaa to finish a close third in the series. The following year Kees was joined by a tall, engaging Austrian called Heinz Kinigadner. They became firm friends and van der Ven won the only ever Canadian 250GP at St Gabriel, in Quebec, to place third in the table once more.

He transferred to 125 GPs, absolutely dominated the first half of the 1984 season (seven moto wins out of the first 10) then broke his wrist – third again! But 'Kini' went two better. The deceptively happy-go-lucky Austrian surged to success in France at St Jean d'Angely, Czecho and Newbury to clinch KTM's fourth 250 world championship and followed it up with an immense 1985 season, overhauling Frenchman Jacky Vimond in an amazing final round at Goldbach to retain

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Beaver Titulaire		★Wife Femme	
Occupation	PROFESSEUR	Signature of owner	Jack Burnicle
Place of birth	BILLINGHAM	Signature of wife	
Date of birth	9/1/47		
Country of Residence	ENGLAND		

IN 1986 KTM STAR
KEES VAN DER VEN
BECAME THE FIRST
MAN TO WIN GPs IN
ALL THREE WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSES



the world title by two points! Fourth in the 125s, versatile van der Ven moved with Kinigadner into 500s for 1986 and became the first rider ever to win GPs in all three classes when victorious at Vimmerby in Sweden. Kees improved to third overall in 1987 with Kinigadner, winner at Namur, seventh ahead of lanky Belgian Jacky Martens.

Long-haired American renegade Trampas Parker hit European shores that season and based himself in Italy. His pal Alessandro Puzar finished fourth for Farioli KTM in the 1988 125GPs while Parker landed an Italian national title. When Puzar departed for Suzuki Trampas took over his factory 125 KTM for 1989, won six rounds (including the British GP at Hawkstone Park) and beat Puzar to the title to reward Sigg Lerner for his years of devotion. KTM also hired another American, Broc Glover, to improve their 250 and the Californian won the final grand prix in Belgium. Then in 1990 yet another Yank, quiet man Bob Moore, split the

factory Suzukis of Donny Schmit and Stefan Everts to finish second in the 125 GPs. Englishman Kurt Nicoll also finished runner-up to achieve their best ever world 500 result and claimed KTM's first British Open title while a young Midlander called Paul Edmondson won their maiden world enduro crown on that scalding 125!

But 1991 proved a year of contrast for KTM who finished second in all three world MX championships. Moore chased Stefan Everts courageously – winning the British and Irish 125 GPs – and outlandish Californian punk rocker Mike 'Gunner' Healey lost the 250 title to Trampas Parker, now on a Honda, by four frustrating points at a thrilling finale in Japan. Jacky Martens won the Finnish and Belgian rounds en route to second in the 500 series behind Georges Jobe. But the Austrian concern filed for bankruptcy and survived only by being broken up into independent companies producing radiators, tools, bicycles and, of course, motorcycles. The newly formed KTM

motorcycle division enabled racing to continue and Kurt Nicoll came within two points of dethroning Jobe when he won a gripping final 500 round at Wohlen in Switzerland.

Exciting times lay ahead. Victory in the 1993 Atlas Rally began their massive commitment to major trans-continental safaris and in 1994, renamed KTM-Sportmotorcycle AG, they commenced production of the fabulously successful supermoto-styled 'Duke' road bike. A year later they bought out Husaberg motorcycles and the Dutch WP suspension company and Parker, riding a 360 two-stroke KTM, took the 500GPs to the last round against Joel Smets – on a Husaberg! Finally, in 1996, burly Kiwi Shayne King landed their first 500cc world MX championship on that sweet 360, beating Smets. Joel subsequently joined KTM, winning them big bore world titles in 2000 and 2003, the same years that South African Grant Langston, under the astute guidance of Kees van der Ven, won world and then American 125cc crowns.

While the latter remains their only AMA MX title Jamie Dobb, Ben Townley, Steve Ramon, Tyla Rattray and Marvin Musquin have since established KTM's 125cc (now MX2) world domination – a lasting tribute to the work of Sigg Lerner who died in 2008. They have also mastered the worlds of schoolboy MX, rallying, supermoto and enduro (where they won all six titles in 2005 – the year they were crowned world 125GP road racing constructors' champions!) and stunned the four-wheeled industry in 2007 by launching their extreme 'X-Bow' sports car.

KTM produce over 80,000 motorbikes annually and with backing from Red Bull are planning another surge into the USA. Not bad for a metalwork shop from Mattighofen!



KTM-MOUNTED
RUSSIAN'S VLADIMIR
KARGINOV (32) +
GENMADY MOISEYEV (1),
SOVIET SUPERSTARS OF
THE 1970S

TOO MUCH, TOO SOON?

A LITES SX CHAMP IN HIS ROOKIE SEASON, THE PRESSURE TO STAY ON TOP NEARLY DERAILED TREY CANARD UNTIL HE TOOK STOCK OF WHAT WAS GOING ON...

To the outside observer Trey Canard would seem to be a successful racer who has just been hampered by a few injuries during his short career. But to those who know him it's not quite as simple as that...

For the ginger kid with the French surname, motocross started out as a family activity and in a lot of ways it still is. "I was born in Oklahoma and my dad and my older brother [Aaron] raced," Canard says. "My family owned a motorcycle shop so I was just always around it. From two days out of the hospital I was probably at our shop. I was going to the races every weekend with my brother and my dad and kind of before I knew it I was on a motorcycle. So that's how I kind of got started.

"We just did it for fun as family. We went and did like little night races and it was just a fun thing for us. Never really took it too terribly seriously. Later on we went to some amateur nationals and I just did that more or less really for fun. I won an 80cc championship and I got a Team Green ride and it kind of started taking off from there. You know, I never was the most outstanding amateur – I was kind of overshadowed by Austin Stroupe and Nico Izzi and guys like that.

"When I got on the big bike is when I really started taking off, that was when I really started winning. I had some great years at Loretta Lynn's and before I knew it I was on a factory team which was unbelievable. You know, to be 17 years old and have a ride was awesome."

Canard was signed by the Factory Connection Honda racing team for his final year of amateur racing, then hit the pros at the end of 2007 for the last few AMA Nationals. He grabbed holeshots and finished in the top five in national motos right away and in his first full season of pro racing as a supercross rookie he won the

first three Lites East SX races and eventually won the title in a final round shootout with Ryan Villopoto that saw Villopoto get run off the track by Canard and into the finishline structure. The move wasn't intentionally dirty but Trey made it clear he wasn't going to be anybody's whipping boy.

"In '08 I really didn't know what to expect going in," Canard says. "It was my first supercross season. You know, I really kind of applied myself and did everything that I possibly could to the point of probably overdoing it a lot. There was no way that I could keep up with the training I was doing for years, or even just a few months. So I did everything that I could and I think that it paid off right away."

Winning is always good, though, right? Maybe not...

"You know, in one sense it was amazing that I had won a few races and I won a championship but on the other hand it was almost one of the worst things that happened to me," Canard says. "Winning became the standard and I put way too much pressure on myself to where if I wasn't on the podium and if I wasn't winning it wasn't good enough. I had too much success too early and it just kind of hurt me over the next couple years. Anything less than a win or second or third was terrible to me.

"As a racer, I think that's how we're programmed but that's something you shouldn't expect right away or all of the time. So it was one of the best and one of the worst things that happened to me but I don't regret it one bit. I think that I learned a lot from it and to have any championship on a Lites bike was an accomplishment." ♦





Frighteningly fast but still incredibly down to earth – Trey's non 'rock star' approach is making him a favourite with the fans

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

STATESIDE



Running the #1 plate he earned in the 2008 Lites East SX series



MOTIVATION... FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

According to AMA rules past national champions have the choice of any (untaken) permanent number of their choice. With Canard's title in 2010 he chose #41 – his dad's racing number.

Trey's dad died when Canard was an 85cc racer. The two were working on Trey's practice track out on the farm, pulling rocks out of the track and dropping them into a creek on the property, when the tractor his dad was driving rolled over. In some ways Canard has been racing to honour his dad ever since and when he had the opportunity to take the number he jumped at it.

Now, during opening ceremonies at supercross, the video that plays prior to Canard's entrance has him saying "this is for you, Pops" then shows a picture of his dad doing a wheelie while standing on the seat of his motorcycle. Canard then rides out onto the floor and pulls a matching wheelie.

"First off, it's just really motivating for me," Canard says. "You know, obviously losing my father when I was a young kid, it's always been something that's been a huge part of my life. Even though he hasn't been here, it's almost like he has in a sense. I have amazing memories of him and it brings a lot of motivation for me to do it, in a way, for him – in his honour in a sense."

"I thought it would be really cool to kind of tell people why I race, you know? What are the reasons. And a big reason that I do race is for my dad. So the video came together really awesome and every time I see it, it kind of gives me goosebumps and it's just a great starter and a great motivator for the rest of the night."



Trey leads defending Supercross champ Ryan Dungey

Over the next couple of years Canard struggled. He was always fast but he was wildly inconsistent. In late 2008 he started grabbing podium finishes outdoors and then ran into a lapper late in a moto at Washougal and broke his femur. It knocked him out for the rest of the year. Then he rushed to be ready for the 2009 supercross season and although he thought he came in prepared it quickly became evident that he wasn't. The season didn't go well. And outdoors things got worse. He wasn't a contender for the first few rounds, then finally at High Point he had the overall win wrapped up as he led Chris Pourcel late in moto two but he switched lines over a jump and ended, badly breaking his arm. Again, he was out for the year.

"When you put so much pressure on yourself you don't allow yourself to really reach your full capabilities," Canard explains. "I think that was the

case – putting so much pressure on myself was forcing me to over-ride and then injuries happened. It kind of just snowballed into a bad dream really. But there were also signs of brilliance, too. I had really good races mixed in with a lot of bad ones. It wasn't all bad but it wasn't where I wanted to be and I kind of put that on the fact that I put way too much pressure on myself."

However, in 2010 he began to turn things around. Although he didn't win the Lites West title in his last attempt he did win races and he filled in for injured Andrew Short on a Team Honda 450 and landed five consecutive podium finishes in East Coast races. But outdoors things started horribly. In the first race of the season at Hangtown he got the holeshot and promptly faded to seventh with no falls or anything. He turned it around in moto two for second but the big key was that he didn't

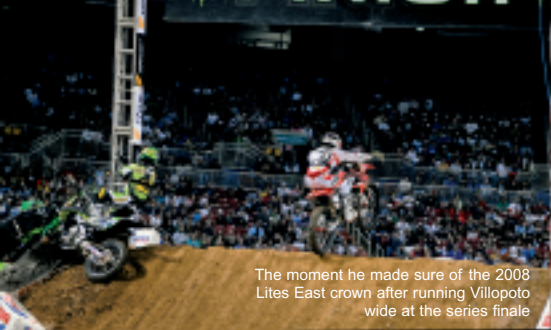
start freaking out. He stayed calm.

A few rounds later he won his first AMA National which was followed by whole slew of others. The wins just kept coming and at the final round he locked up the title when Chris Pourcel tossed himself off and injured his shoulder.

"Last year, when things kind of started to really come together again for me, it almost made it a little bit bittersweet to kind of regain where I always wanted to be," Canard says. "I was happy to be there but sort of frustrated that I wasn't there all along. It was awesome, though, you know? But 2010 was an amazing year even if it had some rough spots in it. It was just a great year overall."

Canard's success and genuine, approachable nature off the track is quickly turning him into one of the most popular racers in the sport.

"[Laughs] I don't know if I'm popular but



The moment he made sure of the 2008 Lites East crown after running Villopoto wide at the series finale



especially the last few months with the championship and Motocross of Nations and kind of starting my 450 journey I've noticed a lot more people stopping by and a lot more people wishing me luck and that sort of thing," Canard says. "You know, I just try to be like Kevin Windham is in a sense that I think that people can really relate to him – he's human, you know?

"I don't want to be this guy that's perfect and robotic. I want to be what every person is. I know that everyone has their ups, has their downs and I think sometimes people get kind of put up on a pedestal to where their lives are so much better and that they're perfect and this and that. I just want to be what I am which is a normal guy. And I think people can relate to that in a sense and if that brings me fans, great. You know, I'm just going to be what I am and thankfully people can relate to that and enjoy it, it seems."

On top of popularity, Canard is quickly

becoming a thorn in the side of the 'Big Four' – James Stewart, Chad Reed, Ryan Villopoto and Ryan Dungey. Through the first four rounds of the championship Canard has been in the mix nearly the whole time.

"For me, it's awesome," Canard says.

"Especially racing with James and Chad and Windham. You know, they're guys that I've idolised for a really long time and when I was on an 80 I was watching these guys race SX in the 250 class. It's a bit of an honour to be racing the track with those guys. Obviously, I've ridden with Villopoto and Dungey a lot more but them too, it's really cool and I think that everyone has an amount of respect for each other that's really cool.

"I just try not to be intimidated by those guys. You know, I'm out there to race and I have the same objective they do. I've been really fortunate to be able to do this and hopefully I can continue to keep growing and hopefully I can get some wins and podiums."



Racing for Team USA in the 2010 MXdN in Colorado

FREE FOR ALL!

THE ESTABLISHMENT, THE UP-AND-COMERS AND THE ROOKIES GO AFTER THE BIGGEST OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLE CHAMPIONSHIP IN THE WORLD

Every year when Anaheim 1 comes around the fans and the industry are abuzz with predictions but the reality is that most years the possibilities are realistically pretty limited. While very few people would've picked Ryan Dungey to win the title at the beginning of last year, the truth was that there was a very limited number of racers who stood any sort of legitimate shot at the championship.


But this year is much, much different...

Since perennial favourites Chad Reed and James Stewart missed the majority of the 2010 championship with injuries, it left everyone wondering if Ryan Dungey was for real, if Ryan Villopoto could continue to win against the wily veterans and what would happen when Lites West champ Jake Weimer and 250cc MX champ Trey Canard were added to the mix?

Well, Weimer broke his arm about 10 days before Anaheim 1 but even so there were a lot of questions to answer starting at round one.



James Stewart races to the win at round two in Phoenix



Broc Tickle's turning up the heat on his team-mate Josh Hansen in the Lites division

ANAHEIM 1

It has been nearly a year since James Stewart has raced an AMA Supercross event and although his speed is never in question it becomes apparent that his racing game has taken a hit in his time off. He starts outside the top 15 while Ivan Tedesco grabs the holeshot over Ryan Villopoto, Brett Metcalfe, Ryan Dungey, Kevin Windham, Josh Grant, Mike Alessi, Davi Millsaps, Trey Canard and Andrew Short. Chad Reed is 13th on lap one.

Villopoto snatches the lead away from Tedesco on the fourth lap and begins to check out while Dungey takes second a couple of laps later. Remarkably, before the halfway point Canard joins the fray – landing third place on the ninth lap – but it's not long before Stewart latches onto Canard's rear wheel, making the move for the final podium position on the 13th lap, then going after Dungey and Villopoto.

However, both Dungey and Villopoto up their pace out front while Stewart gives chase and Stewart can't quite reel them in. So Villopoto draws first blood in the 2011 championship chase over defending champ Dungey, Stewart, rookie Canard and Reed who passes veteran Kevin Windham in the final laps to grab fifth on his self-sponsored CRF450R.

In the Lites class most figure this will be Josh Hansen's championship to lose and they are proven right at the opening round. However, it's Hansen's new team-mate Broc Tickle who grabs the holeshot and leads Hansen around for the first half of the race before Hansen zaps him for the lead. Tickle doesn't have an answer for Hansen's speed and settles for second while their team-mate Tyla Rattray completes the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki sweep in third in his first-ever AMA SX event.

PHOENIX

Determined not to let another bad start ruin his weekend in Phoenix, Stewart decides it's best if he just grabs the holeshot instead so that's what he does. Windham runs second early on in front of Justin Brayton, Villopoto, Canard, Tommy Hahn, Dungey, Reed, Millsaps and Tedesco.

In the old days if you gave James Stewart a couple of laps to run away out front by the time you got into second – no matter who you were, from Ricky Carmichael to Chad Reed and everyone in between – there was no catching him. However, when we say the field is stacked in 2011 it's the truth. It takes Villopoto until lap three to get into second place and by then Stewart has opened up a couple of seconds out front – but within a lap or two Villopoto has closed the gap back up.

For the next nine laps the two racers go back and forth with Stewart pulling out a little bit of a lead, then Villopoto reeling him back in. Until Villopoto buckles. Just as the racers are crossing the startline Villopoto loses the front end on his KX450F and goes down. He gets up in second but has lost touch with Stewart. Stewart goes on to take the win at round two while Villopoto holds on for second place and the points lead. Third goes to Canard over Reed and Dungey – the top five are the same as the previous week but in a slightly different order.

In the Lites class it's another Josh Hansen clinic as the 26-year-old again starts behind his team-mate Tickle and has to work his way forward. He again makes the pass at around the halfway point and then takes off with the victory over Tickle. This time, however, the circumstances are a bit different as Tickle crashes out of the lead rather than watching Hansen go by on the track. Tickle has to pass Ryan Morais back in the late stages in order to get the runner-up spot back while Morais finishes third ahead of Cole Seely and Eli Tomac.



Ryan Villopoto's two wins from four see him a couple of points adrift of James Stewart

LOS ANGELES

Brett Metcalfe, Dungey's team-mate, finally gets a start at the inaugural LA Supercross inside Dodger Stadium and leads the first lap over team-mate Dungey until he gets over-excited and misses the line in a right-hand turn, going down and remounting in ninth. Dungey takes over the lead for one lap before James Stewart comes calling, snatching the spot away.

But it's not over just yet. In one of the greatest races in recent history not only does Dungey begin putting pressure back on Stewart, redheads Ryan Villopoto and Trey Canard soon join the fight. Villopoto passes Dungey, then Canard puts pressure on Dungey just before Stewart falls, handing the lead to Villopoto and second and third to Dungey and Canard. Canard capitalises quickly to take over second but Dungey fights back and relegates the rookie to third.

In the fracas Stewart takes advantage of the fact that neither racer is paying attention to him, passing Canard first then going after Dungey. A few laps later Stewart gets Dungey back and that's the end of the race as Villopoto takes his second win of the season over Stewart, Dungey, Canard, Brayton, Windham and Reed who fell on lap one and came through from 19th to seventh.

In the Lites class we witness a breakout race as Cole Seely grabs the holeshot and then puts his head down. Although Eli Tomac gets close a few times in second Seely is unshakable and soon Tomac falls into the clutches of Broc Tickle and Ryan Morais. With three laps to go Tickle goes after Tomac and actually makes a pass over the finishline heading into the last lap, only for Tomac to shove him wide in the following turn.

The end result is that Tomac maintains second but Tickle ends up losing the spot to Morais. They fight over it until the end of the final lap but ultimately Morais keeps the third position over Tickle in fourth and Hansen in fifth.

OAKLAND

Chad Reed gets the holeshot in Oakland but soon realises that his bike is malfunctioning. Rumours point to water in the ignition but, needless to say, the bike's engine performance is inconsistent which can be very dangerous in supercross.

Villopoto goes by Reed right away – as does Stewart – and the two begin to pull away at the front of the pack. However, only two laps in Villopoto again loses the front end handing the lead to Stewart, second to Reed and third to Dungey. With that the race for the lead is over. Stewart goes on to win the Main Event going away but the Dungey/Reed/Villopoto battle gets good in the latter stages of the event with Dungey passing Reed at the halfway point, then Villopoto catching the both of them.

However, Villopoto goes down again as soon as he's close enough to strike and has to settle for fourth. Reed settles into third and waits until only a couple of laps are left, then takes his chances with his fluttery engine. On the last lap Reed puts in a 48-second lap-time – faster than anybody's in the entire race save Villopoto and Stewart – and snatches away second place in the final turn from a dejected Dungey.

With four rounds down Stewart leads the title by a mere two points over Villopoto. Dungey sits a further 12 points behind with Canard fourth and Reed fifth in points. The same five guys who were in the top five at round one are still in the top five four rounds in.

In the Lites class Tomac grabs the holeshot over Ken Roczen, Hansen, Tickle, Rattray, Morais and the rest of the field. On lap four the wunderkind Roczen takes over the lead when Tomac falls, only for Hansen to pounce on him a lap later and take the lead. Tickle follows closely and just past halfway Tickle ends Hansen's dominance over him, passing him for the lead and then slowly checking out. Tickle takes the win over Hansen, Tomac, Roczen and Rattray.

However, in the title chase Hansen still has the lead – albeit a slim one – with one point to spare over Tickle.



Former champ Chad Reed has to wait until round four in Oakland to get on the podium



SERIES STANDINGS

SUPERCROSS

1	James Stewart
2	Ryan Villopoto
3	Ryan Dungey
4	Trey Canard
5	Chad Reed
6	Brett Metcalfe
7	Andrew Short
8	Kevin Windham
9	Justin Brayton
10	Kyle Chisholm

LITES WEST

92	1	Josh Hansen	88
90	2	Broc Tickle	87
78	3	Ryan Morais	70
71	4	Eli Tomac	69
70	5	Cole Seely	60
55	6	Tyla Rattray	58
49	7	Ken Roczen	49
46	8	Martin Davalos	45
39	9	Kyle Cunningham	44
39	10	James Decotis	40

Defending champ Ryan Dungey's yet to win a Main Event and holds third in the standings



Cole Seely takes a surprise gate-to-flag Lites win in LA



German teenager Ken Roczen is starting to find his feet



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SXUPDATE

FOUR ROUNDS IN AND THE AMA SX SERIES IS TURNING INTO A CLASSIC...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

So we're four rounds down in the AMA Monster Energy Supercross series and there are still plenty of questions yet to be answered. Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto has won two out of the four with San Manuel Yamaha's James Stewart winning the other two. Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey is right there with those guys but hasn't won yet and Team Two-Two Motorsport's Chad Reed hasn't been on point yet although his second in Oakland provided him with some hope.

Some of the surprises are Honda's Trey Canard, Dodge/Hart & Huntington's Ivan Tedesco and in the 250 class it would be Troy Lee Design's Cole Seely who managed to win his first ever 250 race in LA. All in all it's been an exciting start to the series and has indeed lived up to the pre-season hype. With all that in mind, let's take a look at the burning questions that everyone is filling my email inbox with and see if we can make sense of it all.

Q: So who's going to win this thing?

A: Wow, coming out hard right out of the gate. But I suppose that's a fair question. Right now it appears that it would have to be either Ryan Villopoto or James Stewart. They've shared the wins at the four races so far and appear to have a slight edge on everyone else. Notice I said slight?

I believe that right now it's looking like a battle between the Kawi of RV and the Yamaha of Stewart going to Las Vegas. The new element in the series that hasn't been there before was that James used to win or crash. There wasn't anything in between but this year he's been beaten straight up twice by RV and, yes, he got a bad start at the opener but that sort of thing never held him back before. In the end he may end up winning this title but he's going to have to earn it.

So there's blood in the water and the other riders can smell it. RV has never been short in the confidence department and right now he's in the best shape he's ever been in and is looking smoother than ever. In case you're

wondering, RV and Stewie have had the two fastest lap times in every single Main Event.

Q: So what's wrong with Dungey and Reed then?

A: Well, technically, there's nothing wrong with either guy. They are a bit off the top two guys – in Reed's case, maybe more than a bit – and they will keep on trying their best to make it happen. When you're secluded away in your training camp you think you're ready but you truly have no idea. Sometimes the level of speed surprises you and maybe Stew and RV have raised the bar a bit and the others were caught a bit off-guard. Then again, Dungey we know is in shape and we know he's going to be there all the way to the end. He's had a decent race (Anaheim), a bad race (Phoenix) and two pretty good ones (LA and Oakland) so we're not sure yet where he stands. He's real close though.

Reed was behind the eight-ball coming into the series with a whole new team, new bike and was hoping to just be in the hunt before getting better and turning it on in the second half. He's been gushing over the performance of his motorcycle to anyone that asks but all the testing that's been going on during the week tells me that he's not 100 per cent happy with the CRF.

He was right behind Stewart at Anaheim and couldn't move up like the #7 could. In Phoenix he rode well but was off the top three's pace. LA was a wash with a crash and being forced to come from the back but he had some good times in the process. Oakland was better but he caught some breaks with Dungey screwing up right before the finish and RV going down twice. He's already 22 points down and the title looks to be a long shot.

Q: Trey Canard! Really?

A: Yeah, really! The kid has been great so far this year and his ride in LA proved he's the real deal. A crash in his heat race led to an LCQ win which then gave him the 19th gate pick. From there he gated well and challenged for the lead before dropping off the pace a bit. I spoke to him after the race and he

indicated that he just made a few mistakes. Not a whole lot but a 10th here and there and before you know it you've fallen off the back of the leaders.

Canard, having ridden two out of the four LCQs, is a bit jolting but he looks fast and relaxed out there. Maybe we shouldn't be that surprised because of his finishes last year? We all thought it was because of an injury-depleted field but, nope, he's just that fast. He's also a media dream, always happy and available to do interviews and also offers some good insights. How can you not love a guy that does nac-nacs on the parade laps and pumps his fist after holeshooting the LCQ?

Q: Is there anyone else in the class that could challenge the big five?

A: Well right now there isn't much hope for a lot of guys but I believe that you can't count out Kevin Windham because, well, he's Kevin Windham. When the tracks get muddy and sloppy he'll be right there. He was up front in Phoenix before being knocked silly. As well, JGRMX's Justin Brayton was right there in LA in fifth. He lost a little bit of time by the end but he was ready to pounce if anyone made a mistake. Brayton is coming into his own and is learning the speed that's needed. So look for Brayton or Windham to stick it in there but other than that, it's bleak.

Q: What about the 250 class?

A: Well it's another Pro Circuit run to the title between Josh Hansen and Broc Tickle. Sure, TLD's Cole Seely won LA in a great ride but the smart money is either the #100 or the #20 bringing it home. Eli Tomac is learning and getting a few podiums (LA and Oakland), Ken Roczen is super-fast, can whip it like no other and will figure it out soon, Rattray is a bit hurt and the world wants Ryan Morais to win a race, never mind a title. But Hanny and Tickle are the cream of the crop and one of them should win the title.





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THE TONG SONG!

KNIGHTER RULES SUPREME AS THE EXTREME ENDURO SEASON STARTS WITH A BANG IN WILD N' WINTRY WEST YORKSHIRE...

Words and photos by Suttty

It must be quite easy to forget just how frickin' good David Knight is at riding a motorcycle over rocks, through bushes and up n' down streams because every year at the start of the extreme enduro season we ask the same question – can he be beaten? – and the answer is always no! In fact, no matter what you ask him to race (provided it's not a BMW) or who you ask him to race against the results are always the same – David Knight finishes first.

And it's the same old story at the inaugural running of Eddy's Extreme Enduro at Tong Hall where Knighter absolutely dominates despite there being a top-notch entry of extreme enduro specialists including Graham Jarvis, Greg Evans, Jonny Walker, Tom Sagar, Paul Bolton and 12-time world trials champion Dougie Lampkin.

Despite a complete lack of pre-event smack-talk it's quite obvious that the other contenders quite fancy their chances until the M+Ms munching Manx man mountain mullers them in timed practice. >>



Knighter leads Grimbo at the start of the second race

FUTURESPORT?

FORGET ABOUT ROLLERBALL AND CRAP LIKE THAT, ARE EVENTS LIKE EDDY'S EXTREME ENDURO AND THE BRITISH SPRINT ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIPS THE FUTURE OF TRUE OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLE SPORT IN THE UK?

As a spectator sport traditional enduros really don't hit the spot and I don't mean that to sound disrespectful to enduro riders, enduro fans or enduro event promoters. But the truth of the matter is if the average man on the street stumbled across a timecard enduro he really wouldn't know what to make of it and in all honesty – and as disappointing as the fact is – would probably get bored and leave quite quickly.

And it's sort of easy to understand why. From the outside it looks like enduro riders are pretty much just trail riding from special test to special test, clocking in and then going fast for five minutes or so before carrying on up the trail at a moderately sedate pace.

Enthusiasts know it's nothing like that but unless people are willing to do the groundwork and learn about the intricacies of the sport it's hard for them to get too excited about spectating at an enduro unless they happen to stumble across a devilishly deep mud pit or hazardous hill climb. Then the human condition that draws us to destruction and carnage takes over and people get their kicks in a totally different way.

So is simplification and extremification the key to success for enduro as a spectator sport? Some would definitely argue yes and you'd only have to look to America for proof as the sanitised, simplified and intensified version of motocross they called supercross fills football stadiums for 17 weeks and not just with hardcore fans. For the most part purists love it too and it seems like everyone's a winner.

To some degree the promoter of the Enduro World Championship – Alain Blanchard – is already headed down that path as that series is way more spectator friendly than ever before but the basis of the event is still the same – staying on time on the going is just as important as being quick through the tests which means it's really not that easy for the average Joe to get a grip of what's going on or get excited about watching it.

Of course, there is a simple form of enduro racing that's easy for everyone to understand – hare and hounds. In essence a hare and hounds is the same as a motocross race in the way that each class leaves the line together and the winner is the rider who covers the most ground in a set amount of time. The differences are the length of race and the type of courses used.

But from a spectators' point of view motocross is infinitely more spectacular and enjoyable as the comparatively short, sharp races are easy to follow and there's plenty more action n'all as riders push a higher pace all the way to the end. On the flipside even the fittest of enduro riders are unable to run at race pace for the full duration of a hare and hounds and sometimes even with 300 riders circulating one can start to resemble a glorified trail ride. Fun to ride in? Hell yes! Fun to watch? Not so much...

It's not all doom and gloom though as currently there are two forms of enduro racing that are not only very spectator friendly but also close enough to the roots

of the sport not to piss off the purists – sprint and extreme enduros.

While sprint enduros are a pretty new concept, as a sport they're quickly growing in popularity. The basis of the event is simple – riders race a special test-style loop against the clock and they'll do this up to 10 times over the course of a day. The times are then all added together with the rider who's amassed the least amount of time over the combined tests being declared the winner.

But the thing that makes sprint enduros so stunning is the fact that for every single second that a rider's on the course they'll be giving it their all in an effort to set the best time possible. With time between each sprint to rest and prepare for the next, riders are able to attack the track balls out and this means that spectators get to see the country's best off-road racers giving 100 per cent each and every time they see them which is a very rare thing in almost any sport, let alone enduro. Okay, so it's not racing per se but as time-trial competition goes it doesn't get better than this.

An extreme enduro on the other hand is probably best described as a super tough hare and hounds race and while excruciating enduros and hard hare and hounds have been around for longer than I care to remember, specifically promoted 'extreme enduros' have only been seen in the UK for the past half-decade.

What seems like way back in the spring of 2005, WOR's Steve Ireland premiered The Tough One at Nantmawr Quarry and that quickly became a popular perennial on the off-road calendar.

A testing hare scramble – the new and cool name for H+H events – the T1 mixed super-tough natural going with man-made obstacles and progressively got bigger and better to the point it's now an international event that attracts top racers from the far reaches of the globe as well as a great turn out of race fans. By extremifying a simplified enduro Steve produced a marketable and appealing event for spectators and riders and one that's also viable as a business venture.

And the precedent set by The Tough One has undoubtedly helped fuel similar events such as Eddy's Extreme Enduro at Tong Hall. With a full entry list and around 3,000 paying spectators turning out to watch the action/carnage – that's probably six times what the British Enduro Championship will attract all season – it's obvious that this kind of event is hitting the spot even in these tough financial times.

So does that mean we'll be seeing less and less of the traditional style events and more and more from the new school? ACU Chairman Brian Higgins isn't so sure.

"There's no doubt that extreme and sprint events offer a much better spectacle but I don't think they'll be the end of traditional timecard enduros because they're so vastly different," says the former ISDE team member. "The biggest problem with the traditional style events is finding – and keeping – the land to run them on."

And that my friend is a whole new story for a whole different time...



Words of advice from team boss John Shirt Jnr

RESULTS – EDDY'S EXTREME ENDURO

PRO CLASS

1 David Knight	KTM	25+25=50
2 Dougie Lampkin	Gas Gas	22+20=42
3 Greg Evans	KTM	16+16=32

EXPERT

1 Joe Deakin	Husqvarna	25+25=50
2 Jack Lee	Gas Gas	20+22=42
3 Gary Jenkins	KTM	18+20=38

CLUBMAN

1 Jane Daniels	KTM	25+22=47
2 Robert Johnson	Husqvarna	20+25=45
3 Nathan Bolton	KTM	22+18=40

VETS

1 Mark Houson	KTM	25+25=50
2 Paul Sagar	KTM	22+22=44
3 Craig Parkes	KTM	20+20=40

YOUTH

1 Brad Freeman	KTM	
2 Michael Gilby	KTM	
3 Luke Flack	KTM	





Former world trials champ Dougie Lampkin makes his enduro debut for Gas Gas and claims a solid second



Paul 'Bolts' Bolton goes for the full-gas approach



Reece Morewood makes a splash



Jane Daniels is top Clubman, er, sorry, Clubwoman

The first of the two races is no different either and after DK yanks the holey it's more or less all over for the chasing pack. Knighter uses his skill and brute strength to put in lap times that are more than 40 seconds faster than anyone else plus he's way more consistent throughout n'all.

When the chequered flag's unfurled at the end of the first hour-long sprint the E3 world champ is almost seven minutes ahead of runner-up Lampkin who himself has almost a minute lead over Sagar in third. Bolts is the last rider to stay on the lead lap and finishes fourth while KORR team-mates Evans n' Walker scrap it out for fifth with the Welshman edging out the Cumbrian by just 15 seconds.

The second race starts with another Knighter holeshot and although this time Grimbo – who went out early in race one with technical problems – chases hard the end result's pretty much the same with DK eking out a three minute lead by the end as Lampkin steers his shiny new Gas Gas home in third place and the last of the riders to finish on the same lap as Knight. Walker and Evans trade places to finish fourth and fifth while Danny McCanney proves Knighter's not the only Isle of Man resident who can ride this s**t to come home sixth.

DK takes the overall with a 1-1 while Lampkin sneaks home the silver with a 2-3 scorecard and Walker and Evans tie for third with





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If you're still not sure what type of enduro racing floats your boat then how about checking out one of these three events listed below...



© Nuno Laranjeira

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WHERE: Saints Well, Powys

WEB: www.enduro-sprint.com

The opening two rounds of the BSEC series kick off at Saints Well and as well as featuring all the UK's leading enduro racers has also attracted a rare entry from international motocross star Tom Church. If you've never seen a sprint enduro before then expect to be pleasantly surprised because they're all-action affairs from beginning to end.



© Jonty Edmunds

WHAT: Metzeler British Enduro Championship

WHEN: February 27

WHERE: Thetford Forest, Brandon

WEB: www.dissmcc.co.uk

The opening round of the British Enduro Championship is always a well attended one and this year's opener – the Muntjac – is no different with 236 riders pre-entered. Heading the list of riders are current and ex-world champions David Knight and Paul Edmondson plus enduro newbie Carl Nunn. For a proper look at a proper enduro you could do a lot worse than head to Norfolk for the opening BEC round of the year.



WHAT: The Tough One

WHEN: March 13

WHERE: Back Cowm Quarry, Rochdale

WEB: www.worevents.com

The UK's original extreme enduro changes venue for 2011 and finds a new home at the viciously rock strewn Back Cowm Quarry near Rochdale. Extended to a three-hour race from two for 2011, The Tough One should be way more extreme than ever before.



Youth winner Brad Freeman



Tom Sagar calls upon his trials skills to force the Toomer up a slippery bank

Evans getting the nod on the tiebreaker rule by five seconds – Eddy's Extreme Enduro calculates the amassed time from both legs rather than the better second race rule that's traditionally used in motocross.

"It was a really good day for me – great training and an enjoyable way to start the year off," says Knighter. "I knew that it was going to be pretty hard work but apart from a few falls everything went well for me. The track wasn't too hard but there wasn't really anywhere you could take a break. It's been a good start to the year and a really good event."

In the Expert division Joe Deakin easily wins ahead of the super-stylish Jack Lee and

Gary Jenkins while Jane Daniels shows the boys how it's done to take the overall in the Clubman class even though she competes one lap less than Rob Johnson. With the results from both races counting towards the overall Jane's 1-2 outscored the MPS Husky rider's 3-1. Mark Houson takes maximum points in the Vets by beating Paul Sagar and Craig Parkes across the line in both races.

Between the two main races a 45-minute Youth race takes place with Brad Freeman taking a well-deserved win on his 85cc KTM. Michael Gilby charges to within nine seconds of Brad as he finishes second while Luke Flack rounds out the podium.



To Hell

To Hell AND BACK!

COLLAPSED SUBFRAMES, ALTITUDE SICKNESS, CHANGING ENGINES IN SAND DUNES, SLEEP DEPRIVATION AND THE MOTHER OF ALL HIGHSIDES – EXPERIENCE 14 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF BRIT-BASED AUSSIE SI PAVEY AS HE TACKLES HIS EIGHTH DAKAR RALLY...

Words by **Simon Pavey** Photos by **Maindru**

Dakar is like cat nip to me. Ever since I first saw it on TV as a young lad it's been the ultimate goal. It was always the hardest, longest, most challenging race and the one race I think most people have dreamed of doing. Well, with some major credit card spending, a bit of luck and some very kind people I got to the startline in Paris in 1998. Almost 100 zip-ties and two weeks later I had endured an experience that brought new meaning to the word 'difficult' but I caught the bug and despite swearing I would never go again, come 2011 I lined up in Buenos Aires for my eighth Dakar in the last 11 editions.

The race has changed dramatically in that time. My first year assistance was only for factory riders, the rest of us had two lovely white boxes and a bloody lot of duct tape. It was like that for everyone and that was one of the reasons that Dakar was so hard – it was just you against the worst of Africa. You weren't really there to race other people, just surviving was the biggest challenge. Over the years people started providing assistance to anyone. Spares, tyres, mechanics – if you could afford it, you could have it...

The move to South America has

accentuated this and it's a fair bit more developed than West Africa. People have motorhomes to sleep in at the bivouac, there are cars, hotels and thousands of people. It has definitely been sanitised – it's more of a 'race' than ever before and has lost a little bit of that man versus nature thing. But that's no bad thing and it's still one of the hardest races in the world with the ability to kick you in the nuts repeatedly if it wants to.

The rules have changed a lot now with safety and making the race more versatile the organisers' main priority. The maximum capacity is now 450cc which has resulted in much harder riding and some seriously big new challenges. While it has been lovely having assistance on the last six Dakars – and at times I would never have made it without help – I was relishing a new challenge. So when a few sponsorship pieces didn't come together how I envisaged and assistance started looking a little wallet heavy I jumped at the chance of going solo. I think I was a little nostalgic about the comradery of Dakars past and in my head we'd all chip in together at the bivouac like boy scouts or something...

The first two or three days of Dakar have traditionally been nothing days – simple riding, little navigation and lots of crowd

dodging. The move to Argentina hasn't changed any of that. The crowds have become bigger and the weather is about 35 degrees hotter than Paris in January but not much else has changed. Everything was pretty smooth for me although it's easy to get dragged into thinking that you're amazing and can win. People go off like it's a motocross and a few guys went out on the very first danger marker of the race.

But by day four the brown stuff had hit the fan and I had pretty terrible day. My subframe collapsed at the start of the special and it took me ages to strap it up. One of the worst things that can happen in Dakar is getting stuck at the back. The cars catch you – and it's bloody terrifying when a factory car overtakes you at 100mph – then you sit in endless dust for the next seven hours. It kinda sucks. I strapped the rear tanks back on the bike, passed all the quads and about 20 bikes, then my tanks fell off again. I put everything back together, re-passed all the same people before getting stuck behind a quad for 50km. I finally passed him before having a stupid crash and letting him back past. It was a pretty crappy day, I lost over two hours and had to start the next day at the back of the pack.

The following few days were pretty

>>

CK!

MALLES MOTO

MALLES WHAT?

Malles Moto is basically the class with no outside assistance. You can ride any bike but you're not allowed a mechanic. It's just you, the two boxes that organisers transport for you and two spare sets of wheels. You can't get much in a box either and because they leapfrog each other you have to double pack most things – two tents, two bike stands, oil, food, clothes, filters etc. There's no room for luxuries at all. I paid for my spare tyres, mousses and an engine on an assistance truck but that was all. It's a great way to do Dakar on a budget too because assistance packages cost a small fortune...



steady as I slowly worked my way back up the leaderboard. The riding itself was flat-out awesome – huge fun and with incredible scenery. Along with the move to smaller bikes the organisers have worked hard to keep the cars and bikes a bit further apart by creating different routes where possible. The bike routes were often pretty technical and on one day there was 40km that would have been at home on a tough enduro. The only other problems I had was with the altitude – when we crossed the Andes into Chile you have to ride at 4500 metres for almost two hours. It messes with your head and you fall asleep while you're riding – pretty damn scary really.

With all the rule changes leaning towards 450s the next big issue for me came on the rest day. I started the race in the Marathon class – basically you're given one engine and limited on the parts that can be changed. By the rest day I was third in my class and catching the leaders every day. It was a real possibility I could win the class and I was quite excited by the prospect. I had originally planned to change my engine and continue in the Malles Moto class (non assistance) but with me doing well in Marathon it changed things a little. The bike was feeling really strong and after talking to almost everyone on the race I decided against changing my engine.

About five o'clock that evening I was delightfully informed by an FIM official that I was being removed from Marathon class because my BMW G450X had never been homologated with the FIM. I was moved to the Malles Moto class and while I was third there too I was a fair way off the lead and I didn't see me catching up without some good luck. But the very next day things went really well for me, the class leader had a shocker and lost well over an hour and I moved up to second and was just 10 minutes off the lead. It was a bit of a shock but I was feeling

pretty excited.

Stage nine was where it all went pretty Pete Tong, there are no other words to describe it. About 70km into the day I rode up a dune and the bike stopped dead. The conrod snapped just below the piston pretty violently, coming out the bottom and top of the crankcases. It was really messy. That was a real low point – my spare engine was a long way away, I had no way of getting to it and it wasn't exactly repairable by the side of the track. At that point I was out – in my head the rally was done for me. I even made a little 'end of the road' video and resigned myself to the sweeper truck. Sometimes luck is on your side though...

As I sat there waiting for the sweeper truck to come past a local 4X4 popped over the top of a dune. They had come to see what all the fuss was and the guy in the passenger seat was a friend I knew from previous rallies! So after a little bribe and a tank of fuel later I managed to get to my spare engine and get it back to the bike. It took a good three hours to change the engine – an utter mission to do in the dunes. The force of the conrod breaking bent one of the engine mounts pretty bad and the swingarm bearings collapsed too. That turned into a really hard day, I lost over seven hours and when I got to the bivouac there was another two hours work on the bike. That's where Dakar can really kill you. I got three hours sleep that night and we had a 4am start.

Stage 10 was a killer. We crossed back over the Andes into Argentina, once again at serious altitude and it was a real struggle to stay awake and keep riding. The day was bad before we even made the start of the special. I started at the rear of the bike field and on the liaison they put the cars too close to the back of the bikes. It was all off-road but we had all been warned to stick to the speed limits. The cars pretty much ignored this and came past us all at 80mph so

we had to ride in their dust most of the way. About 30 of us missed the start time for the special and had to wait until all the cars and trucks had started before we were allowed to go.

The riding was really difficult that day too – such deep sand, it was really hot and with pretty difficult navigation. It was good fun but it amazes me that there weren't more blown-up 450s. It was 45 degrees and the sand was ridiculously soft and all the bikes were running hot, especially because it was so slow.

About 80km from the end of the stage I had a crash that nine times out of 10 would have resulted in broken bones. It was huge, no doubt the biggest crash I've had in years. Maybe I was tired and didn't react well, I don't really know much about what happened. The going was fast but I was by no means pushing hard, it was a fourth gear corner, the back let go out of nowhere and I high-sided road race style. I hit the deck so hard I was in a world of pain, just not moving. I haven't ever had a crash that battered my whole body like that. I just lay there for over half-an-hour. It happened in front a crowd which was probably my saving grace. They sort of nursed me like a baby, picked my bike up, got some painkillers in me and about an hour or so later I managed to get back on. I was a real mess, I could barely ride at all. I couldn't pull the clutch in, couldn't stand up.

A few km down the track there was a 90 degree corner, I didn't have the strength to hold the bike up and crumpled like an OAP. This again was where I was so lucky – as I got up I noticed my whole right side was covered in oil. In the first crash the oil line to the cooler had come loose and the bike threw almost all the oil. Again some spectators dragged my bike off the ground for me and helped me fix it. I rode a few more km before finding a big crowd of people and I managed to scrounge some oil – just in time as

the bike was completely empty by then. The next 30km to the finish were by far some of my hardest on any Dakar. I just couldn't ride, I barely made it out of first gear for the next three days.

Somehow I still managed to keep riding and maintain my third place in Malles Moto and despite some tedious fuelling issues I managed to make the finish in Buenos Aires. Dakar was truly awesome this year, the riding was immense, some really technical enduro going, incredible scenery and some true adventure.

I owe everyone a massive debt of gratitude for the opportunity to go so big thanks go to all my sponsors – BMW Motorrad Central Scotland, BMW Park Lane, Castrol, World of BMW, Craghoppers World Travel Clothing, Cotswold Outdoor, Michelin, Touratech, Safari Tanks, G Webb Automation, Zarges and everyone that helped me build the bike, Evan Davies, Linley Pavey and everyone that supported me through my website www.simonpavey.com



KTM COUNT UP!

FACTORY FIGURES...

While Si went it alone this year, the Dakar Rally is one of the annual main events for the might of the KTM factory team. Here's their 2011 event in numbers...

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- ★ 10th consecutive win for KTM
- ★ Five stage wins to Coma
- ★ Three stage wins to Despres
- ★ 9500km through Argentina and Chile
- ★ 4837m – highest point of altitude crossing the Andes
- ★ More than 250km driven over an altitude of 4000m
- ★ Hottest temperature – 42 degrees in the shade in Chilicito region
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SPOTLIGHT ON... TOMMY ALBA

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With all the snow at the back end of last year and with it the frozen ground that inevitably meant a raft of cancelled meetings, the run-up to Christmas was pretty dire to say the least. Since then, however, the New Year has really blossomed and right now we're facing the very real prospect that new names could be on the verge of blowing the youth MX doors right off their hinges!

The most exciting prospects to emerge? Charlie Kent in the 65s and Tommy Alba in the Youth Open/Rookies division. Rage featured young Kenty as a seven-year-old cracker this time last year and it looks like we picked a real winner there – more on him I'm sure as this year progresses. So what about Tommy Alba? Well, at 6ft 2in and 12-and-a-half stone he's a giant of a young fella – and big is beautiful in the world of enduro where his background lies. But the 14-year-old has also strung some seriously good MX results together over the winter.

I don't think I've ever met anyone who trains harder, presents better and wants it so much. With awesome levels of fitness that allow him to run a 50-minute moto at race speed around Dunkirk, the frighteners have been put on the youth classes recently at Mepal, Wilden and Polesworth. Tommy was also flying the flag in the Youth section at the Le Touquet beach bash recently. And what a fantastic result – a ninth place finish up against the likes of Dylan Ferrandis, Arnaud Aubin and Alexis Gaudree plus 126 others from all over Europe. And all of that despite losing his rear brake on the opening lap and having race-long fuel filler problems. Absolutely awesome!

Okay guys, let's get to know Tommy Alba a bit better with a comprehensive Q and A...

Rage: What's the racing background Tommy?

TA: "I've actually been on and off a motorbike since I was five – but early on it was just messing around. I didn't do any serious competitive stuff until I was 10 or 11 and I won an 85cc BW enduro title. Because of my height since the age of 12 I have been on bigger bikes – that year I qualified for the BSMA finals on a 125 even though I was only 12. From 13 onwards I have been on a 250F. My best MX national results to date – I've only done three nationals – came at Pontrillas with third overall at the BSMA and fifth overall in the Masters MX2 although I qualified second."

Rage: How's the competition race plan for 2011 looking so far?

TA: "The BSMA national series will be my main MX championship with wild card entries at the Red Bull and Masters series – it's all a bit fluid with fill-in events right now and I'll also be doing GBXC enduro events."

Rage: Are you committed one way or another to either MX or enduro – and do you have a personal preference?

TA: "I think I feel more committed to MX right now because I find it so exciting to do. However I do like enduro and hare and hounds racing because of the extended time on the bike and the way it makes you think about lines and stuff like that."

Rage: Having done just three youth nationals so far and being a relative newbie to the championship scene what are your initial impressions?



Tommy Alba is one of the most exciting packages in youth racing

FAVE THINGS

TOMMY'S TOPS!

Fave MX rider: "Ken Roczen."

Fave MX track: "Mepal or Dunkirk – I really like sand."

Fave food and drink: "Curry and pasta and I drink orange and squash."

Fave hobby: "BMX riding in the summer plus all my other training – swimming, cycling, running etc."

All-time sporting hero:

"Ryan Dungey."

TV or media: "Any AMA racing from the States."

"Excuse me!" He's a big lad who knows how to muscle his way through the pack



TA: "Initially MX seemed very tough because you have to be flat-out from the very start. I still struggle a little bit on some jumps too – simply because there aren't any at enduros. Maybe they could make an MX track with more trees! When I went to the Red Bull EYC at Canada Heights last year I couldn't believe how quick the top guys were going – and how fast their machinery was too. I learnt a lot there – it was a real eye-opener."

Rage: Have you set yourself a personal goal for national achievement this year?

TA: "A top three finish in the BSMA series but if it's all going to plan really well we will step it up at the Red Bull and Masters. Gotta stay healthy too."

Rage: With a lot of pro-like set-ups in youth MX these days could you tell Rage a bit about the guys and girls doing the background work in the Alba pit?

TA: "My dad has a really good racing background. He started in the AMCA and he was still racing until quite recently and successfully too in the Evo class at national twinshock events. He has also raced Weston and Le Touquet many times. He's really good with the spanners and everything to do with the bike – so no problems there."

"Mum's actually a chef by trade and also in this year's London Marathon so brilliant too on diet and general nutrition for sports needs. I guess we're all fitness/health mad in my family. Over the years dad's also been my kinda personal fitness trainer for physical and bike routines. He has been brilliant at getting across the importance of both."

Rage:: Finally Tommy, a bit about your sponsors please...

TA: "Oakleaf are a local building company – the owners are Dave and Shaun Anthony and they used to race too. They and my dad go way back as good friends. JR is John Rutherford from the sidcar/twinshock racing world – he and some other friends are helping out as is Gary from Albion Motorcycles with great deals on bikes – and there's also help from Sammy at MD Racing. So a big, big thanks goes to all of them."



Conrad's already looking at home on his BW85

FAVE THINGS

CONRAD'S CHOICE

Fave friends in the paddock:

"David Keet and Jack Seabourne."

Fave all-time circuit: "Apex, Lille and Foxhill."

Fave MX rider: "Ken Roczen."

Fave hobby: "Snowboarding."

Fave food and drink: "Pasta and Lilt."

All-time sporting hero: "Ken Roczen."

Fave music: "Black Eyed Peas."



DEALSONWHEELS!

CONRAD MEWSE JUMPS BETWEEN SW AND BW AS HE CHASES DOWN CROWNS IN 2011

Major congratulations headed Conrad Mewse's way after last season's truly magnificent efforts. He began last term as an 11-year-old 65cc upgrade and proceeded to seriously shake up the big names in the BYMX. In fact, he was actually right in there with a good championship shout all the way to the penultimate round at Brampton.

Then, of course, he went on to sensationally win the EYC smallies crown and capped the year off by being voted DBR Youth Rider of the Year for 2010. All in all a jolly good 12 months!

Going for high profile trophies on two fronts last year seemed to bring with it a certain amount of pressure – but Conrad's upping his challenge even further this time around. A set of small wheels will be bolted in for the BYMX nationals, then he'll switch to big wheels at EYC and BSMA events.

Racing different wheel sizes in different championships has been done before by the likes of James Dunn – and quite successfully too – but if Conrad manages to win any series this year it will take his national count to an amazing five championship crowns at just 12 years old. Now that really would be a stat to ponder – and one that would seriously take some beating in the future.

At Wilden Lane quite recently Conrad put the new BW machine to the test. It was clear to see that the Somerses smasher has grown a little bit over the winter months but he's still a tiny lightweight set of bones on a very fast projectile. His power to weight ratio will give him a big surge off the startline for sure but his lack of leggy inches could be awkward on occasions.

Conrad ditched big stylee in his first outing at Wilden giving Kyle Lane a massive half-lap advantage but Conrad being Conrad he then put on a polished display to nail the win in the final turn. Following that it was a bit of a gate-to-flag rout with Conrad totally cleaning up with two more heat wins.

Conrad's well known for being a whirlwind both on and off the course but with the help of dad Steve and granddad Cliff we managed to stop him in his tracks for a few minutes – here's what the little fella and Team Mewse had to say...

RAGE: What have you been up to since the close of last season – have you been training hard or just simply recharging the batteries?

TEAM MEWSE: "A bit of both really. We have deliberately taken a longish break off the bike but there's been some training in Dunkirk and lots of good fun snowboarding."

RAGE: Can you tell Rage why you decided to go for three separate championships in 2011 splitting the effort with different sized wheels?

TM: "After winning the small wheel in the Red Bull EYC it would be nice to win another championship this year, possibly the BYMX. We also feel he'd benefit more with riding harder and increasing speed with the big wheels."

RAGE: Anything else new for 2011 guys? I can see you've become a splendid looking 2011 rep for Fox gear – have you picked up any other new sponsors?

TM: "A big thanks is due to Framptons Transport Services Ltd, Miles MX, Goldentyre and of course Fox."

RAGE: Looking at all three of the championships in 2011 there are quite a few real tasty venues on offer – are you especially looking forward to any of them in particular?

CM: "I do prefer sand tracks and am looking forward to riding for the first time at Desert Martin and Hawkstone Park."

RAGE: What one thing would you change about youth MX if you had the power to?

TM: "We would like to be able to drop a race in championships."

FACTFILE

HARRY KIMBER

Age: 10

Hometown: Henstridge

Number: #78

Bike: Twisted 7

Kawasaki 65cc

First race: Henstridge

First bike: LEM 50

Favourite track: Whitby

MX hero: Ryan Dungey

Best MX moment:

"Winning Weston Beach Race and Belfast SX..."

Worst MX moment:

"When my throttle stuck!"

Worst injury:

Broken elbow

Likes: MX, BMX

and RC cars

Dislikes: School

Favourite film:

I am Legend

Favourite TV: Blood,

Swear and Gears

Music: Cheryl Cole

Food: Chicken Korma

Drink: Hot chocolate

Car: Porsche

Trainer: Paul Cowshall

What animal would you

be? "A monkey because I

like climbing!"



Harry's a little fella in a big hurry

HURRY UP HARRY!

KIMBER LIMBERS UP FOR EYC GLORY...

The 65cc class is where the greats of tomorrow start out and the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup is no exception – just look at Conrad Mewse who jumped straight from being 65cc champ to being crowned SW85cc king in his first year in the division.

Without Conrad the 2010 65cc class was a hotly contested battle between the eventual champion Keenan Hird, second-placed Ryan Vickers and Taylor Hammal in third. Now all three of these riders have made the jump to the 85cc SW class which leaves us questioning who will take over the mantle?

Looking at the form from 2010 there are two clear favourites for the 65cc class in Dylan Woodcock and Harry Kimber. Both these riders were in the top 10 of the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup for 2010 and with only 70 points separating

them at the end of the season these two will be set for a battle royale throughout the 2011 campaign.

So let's take a look at Harry Kimber fresh off the back of winning the 2010 65cc Weston Beach Race and the 65cc class at the Belfast SX. Harry is only 10 years old but already he has managed to secure himself a spot on the well-supported Twisted 7 Kawasaki team. This team is all about progressing youth riders and with such a good team behind him Harry will be able to learn a thing or two off the other guys about how to win a championship – especially as they have 2010 Red Bull Elite Youth Cup BW champion James Harrison on board.

So what makes a 10-year-old sponsored rider tick? Rage took the time to pull a factfile together on this little pocket rocket...

TOOFAST!

MEET THE MX MOVIE MAKERS!

In these modern times youth MX can get a bit of an unfair slamming from certain ill-informed quarters so it's great to see kids with enterprise waving the smart flag around. Kids who think slightly outside of the box – kids who spot a real opportunity and then run with it.

Jordan and Max Hind are the two guys in question. The results of their hard work can be seen not only at Peterborough club events where they have amassed a combined and impressive 380 wins between them but also through Too Fast film productions. The guys started in a simple way on YouTube using a basic camcorder but have fully embraced the ever-changing world of digital communication and are now producing entertaining, well above amateur standard race videos.

If you don't believe me check out these amazing stats. They are currently official YouTube partners with their 999lazer channel having attracted over 1.25 million hits up to last Christmas alone – and it's growing at 100k a month! To achieve these incredible numbers there's obviously a lot of hard work going down in the background and 15-year-old Max is the powerhouse thinker behind the advertising policy. Max also fronts up on the race day microphone with 16-year-old Jordan as the office-based computer whiz kid. On camera filming and overseeing all is dad Phil.

The guys are all too aware they have a little way to go before they reach total pro standards but with the drive and progress they have already shown I'm sure it won't be long in coming around. Check them out at www.toofastfilms.com



Max is comfortable on both sides of the camera

Jordan's the tech geek



GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at mikegurney55@yahoo.co.uk

SUPER FLY GUY!

IN BETWEEN DODGING FLOODS, PUTTING IN SOME HARD LAPS AND CHECKING OUT HIS COOL NEW RIDING DUDS, OUR DOWN UNDER WONDER'S BEEN GETTING INVOLVED IN A SPOT OF SECOND-HAND VAN SALES...

Words and photos by Billy MacKenzie

It's been a tough month over here, for Queensland in particular. I'm from Queensland over here for people not up to date with their geography. Queensland is kinda in the middle of the East Coast and called the Sunshine State! Not this month however...

After banging on to everyone back home about how great the weather is and feeling very righteous in my decision to move to Australia, I kinda got handed a raw deal when Mother Nature unloaded a stupid amount of water from the clouds.

I've never been part of any natural disasters in my lifetime and I wouldn't really call the floods that happened over here a huge natural disaster in terms of the movies we watch. But on a scale of one to 10 from the way I look at things I'd say it was about a five or six maybe? Maybe because I wasn't directly affected by the floods but my friends from Toowoomba all said it was pretty scary and from seeing some of the damage driving back and forth to Toowoomba after it had died down you could see how the water completely ripped the river banks apart.

There was some proper concern that all the dams we have would burst and then we would have really been in the s**t! All the water would have run down towards the Brisbane river and it woulda been a lot worse than it was. So as much as the TV dramatises everything it was a pretty big deal and there were a lot of unfortunate people affected by the floods.

It's defo something I haven't seen before with my own eyes but for me it was pretty exciting! I've always been fascinated by the weather and storms etc so it was exciting and a bit nerve racking to be apart of something like that but not as scary as the TV makes out! Harriet's dad was over just before the floods came and he had to endure a week of solid rain which wasn't ideal. Anyways, enough about the weather – Jesus, that's what people talk about when there's nothing to talk about...

So, onto things of interest. When the weather went away it was back to riding and I was getting proper excited about it. I was having flashbacks to last year when I was cutting out 40-minute motos in the extreme heat and it started to float my boat a little bit. Last year I spent a lot of time at my mate's farm riding his deep sand track. It was amazing getting out there and leaving the world behind. So I wanted to make sure I headed back out that way to get the laps in with my good mate

Keith Amor who came over to stay just as Harriet's dad was leaving.

Keith is an old friend from home who I'm sure I've mentioned before and we always get together for a winter training session in preparation for the season. This year he is riding for Honda doing the world endurance championships and all the major road races in Ireland so we both have our goals to reach and we have been working hard on and off the track.

Riding at Matt's house is the perfect way to build up on bike fitness. It's over a two-minute lap time around the deep, flowing sand track out in the middle of nowhere! It's fun and peaceful being away from the city and Matt's mum always cooks me the best homemade food! Anyways, we started off on 20-minute motos to break ourselves in and were already up to 35 minutes by the end of the week. Not pushing things too hard but still riding a good pace. I had a good flow going every moto and the bike was working perfect!

I always love getting on a new bike when I start riding and we've already got a great set-up with help from Pro Circuit and my mechanic Ian. The bike is just a pleasure to ride and the laps are coming to me nicely at the moment. The heat some days is crazy but you feel such an improvement after each day that it just makes you want to do more!

After being in the gym for the last two months it's a very different feeling waking up in the morning after gruelling motos and feeling completely toned from head to toe, not just in my shoulders or abs from whatever gym exercise I have been doing. Motocross really works every single muscle in your body and works it to perfection.

So after working on my weak points in the gym, then feeling the improvement on the bike, it gives me the confidence to run, cycle and ride harder, faster and longer each day. With every improvement in distance, weight or speed comes more confidence and I really wanna be peaking for the start of the season. I feel I have had my fun year now but now I wanna win again. I think it was a blessing in disguise that I lost last year because I may not be training as hard as I am now and I feel I am already ahead of where I was last year at this time.

The next two weeks is a full-blown riding programme so I'll be cutting out 45-minute motos by the end and probably feeling either amazingly good or pretty drained! Which leads me onto my next subject...

Kawasaki have a team sponsor called BSC – Body Sports Science – which is a major supplement and dietary specialist who also support Australian rugby and football teams. We're pretty lucky to be involved with them so Keith, my new team-mate Dean Ferris and I all went down for a proper sit down and lengthy discussion on our eating habits, training programmes and supplements. It was good to get an expert opinion on everything and also have access to the sports university where we can get all our fitness and vo2 max tests done. I left with a boxful of goodies and booked in for my tests so I should have all that business to chat about next month.

Oh hey, I sold my camper! My first build and sell! I'm gonna be the new RS/SC Motorhomes of Australia! Tell ya what too, those boys could learn a few things from my joinery skills! The camper was a mad creation and it was probably the coolest thing I've ever built but it was time for it to go as it was just parked outside not being used for a while. The rain was putting me off going to the beach and I just had that feeling to get rid of it so I did! It was the coolest thing for taking to the beach though – it had everything you could think of and was really inconspicuous.

We kinda just blended in with the traffic down the beach rather than being branded a 'camper'. It was like a little stealth mobile, full blacked out windows so you could just watch the world go by while in the comfort of your own bed. I will miss it and we had some giggles in it – the funniest times were when people used to check themselves out in the reflection of the windows, unaware that we were staring right at them only centimetres away.

I'm wearing Fly kit this year and I really like it. I actually have shirts that fit me this year and it makes me think I look cool on the bike! Plus the fact I don't get my sleeves caught in the clutch lever is a much added bonus. I feel streamline and fit on the bike so far, still working hard on my technique as well as fitness, so hopefully if all goes well this year in the Aussie Nationals I can come back and do the British GP. I have already talked with Kawasaki and Steve Dixon about it so barring any misfortunes I'll be home for Matterley and I hope I can do you all proud!

It'll be awesome to come race at that track again – it's one of my favourites...

BD 11



JAKE WEIMER





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 **thor**